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Bihar District Gazetteers

SAHARSA

By

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PRINTED BY THE SUPERINTENDENT,
SECRETARIAT PRESS, BIHAR, PATNA,
1965

[*Price—Rupees Ten only.*]

PREFACE.

This is the first Gazetteer for Saharsa district. Saharsa was once a part of Bhagalpur district; she was first given the status of a sub-district and then that of a district. The hitherto unpredictable Kosi river had ruled the economy of the district for decades and had constantly ravaged the district till recently. Kosi river has now been tamed and the Kosi project will eventually change the face of the district. A Gazetteer of the district at this stage catching a glimpse of the past and featuring the present has a particular importance for the future. The district has a new look and a future.

The State Government of Bihar in the Revenue Department have undertaken the work of publishing a new series of Gazetteers of the districts as the books in the old series have become obsolete for many purposes. The last *District Gazetteer of Bhagalpur* did not give much space to the Saharsa area either. Saharsa was rather inaccessible before and a journey from Bhagalpur to the subdivisional headquarters in Saharsa area involved a journey by train, boat, trolley and partially on foot. The subdivisional headquarters had to shift several times because of Kosi ravages. Saharsa was almost a cinderella of the State.

This is the fourteenth District Gazetteer with me as the Editor. The District Gazetteers of Gaya, Hazaribagh, Muzaffarpur, Singhbhum, Saran, Champaran, Purnea, Bhagalpur, Monghyr, Palamau, Darbhanga. Dhanbad and Santal Parganas have already been published. I had the privilege of organising this section from a scratch and the opportunity to collect, collate facts and features, write and edit the Gazetteers of all these districts.

Several years after the Revenue Department had taken up the work and entrusted it to me as the Editor, the Ministry of Scientific Research and Cultural Affairs (now merged in the Ministry of Education—Science) took up the matter and a scheme was drawn up for the re-writing of the District Gazetteers throughout India on a similar pattern. The State Government of Bihar had agreed to follow the pattern laid down by India as far as possible. Some independent field investigations were also done by the Gazetteers Revision Section and the results of some of the latest researches by others on the tribals have been included. The role of the district in the implementation of Government policies with reference to National Planning and

Community Development forms a particular item according to the Headings and Contents. A critical appraisal of some of the work done has been given and the observations made should be taken as personal and not at Government level. In the text on Places of Interest, an attempt has been made to include all places of historical and tourist interest, pilgrim, commercial and trading centres and other important villages.

The compilation of this District Gazetteer had posed a great problem. Materials were scarce and very often wrong data were supplied from sources which should have known better. There was a bewildering maze of wrong agricultural statistics made available that had to be screened. Unbeaten fields had to be covered in appraising recent development schemes. While writing the text on 'People' it was found that there was a very great drop in the population of the tribals in the recent Census of 1961 and the matter has been referred to the appropriate authorities for further investigation. There have been no recent Survey and Settlement Operations nor any socio-economic or technical survey of the district. The officers in key position probably due to their own problems could have very little leisure to give much contribution.

I was, however, able to enlist the help of a few collaborators. Particular mention has to be made of Prof. R. K. Choudhury, M.A., G. D. College, Begusarai and Shri P. C. Singh, Senior Deputy Collector of Bhagalpur. Prof. Choudhury helped me in the text on 'History'. Shri P. C. Singh, a keen photographer and a student of architecture had to face a delicate problem in getting the photo of the famous image at Mahishi village commonly worshipped as Ugratara and some other photos in the district. He confirmed my doubt that the image was not Ugratara and indicated that it was an image of Khadirvani Tara. Dr. Binoytosh Bhattacharaya, a recognised authority on Budhist iconography was very kind to confirm later the image at Mahishi to be Khadirvani Tara and not Ugratara. The Central Gazetteer Unit of the Ministry of Education (Science) gave me some useful suggestions which were incorporated. Shri S. Roy, Deputy Director of National Archives of India, New Delhi, has been an unfailing source of information for this Gazetteer as he was for its predecessors. The Government Printing Press, Gulzarbagh, took personal care for the execution of the work. I acknowledge with thanks their kind help.

Great encouragement and help in scholastic discussions were received from Shri S. K. Chakravarty, Secretary of the Revenue Department, Shri B. C. Patel, Minister for Revenue

and Shri K. B. Sahay, Chief Minister. It was Mr. Sahay who as a Minister for Revenue had sponsored the compilation of the new series of the District Gazetteers of Bihar. Their confidence in me has been an inspiration.

I have attempted to present an objective book for a wide range of readers. The book is an investigation of the man and the district and the role of the district in the country. An up-to-date picture of the district has been made out knowing well that the district will undergo rapid changes in the coming two decades. I have enjoyed the exacting task and no one is more conscious than myself of the lacunae. It is for others to say if the work has been a contribution or not.

PATNA :
The 26*th December,* 1964.

P. C. ROY CHAUDHURY.

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CHAPTER I.

GENERAL.

ORIGIN OF THE NAME AND FORMATION OF THE DISTRICT.

No authentic information is available as to the origin of the name of Saharsa but there is a village at a distance of about one and half miles from the Saharsa Railway Station which is known as Saharsa. Prior to the formation of the district there were only the village of Saharsa and a railway station of the same name. So far the formation of the district is concerned, it has been discussed elsewhere. It may, however, be repeated here that the district was created in 1954, has three subdivisions, namely, Saharsa Sadar, Madhepura and Supaul and there are 15 police *thanas*.

The history of the district as an administrative unit has been discussed elsewhere. The names of the different police *thanas* have been given in the text on General Administration.

LOCATION.

Saharsa is situated in between 26°34′ and 25°30′ latitude and between 86°19′ and 87°8′ longitude. The *District Census Handbook of Saharsa*, 1951,* published in 1956 gives the area as 2,143 square miles while the *Census of India*, 1961—*Final Population Totals*† mentions the area to be 2,093 square miles. The difference is negligible. The population in 1951 census was 1,308,198 while the population in 1961 census is 1,723,566.

BOUNDARIES.

It is bounded on the north by Nepal, on the south by Bhagalpur and Monghyr districts, on the east by Purnea and on the west by Darbhanga and Monghyr districts.

TOPOGRAPHY.

The topographical features of the district of Saharsa which formed the northern portion of Bhagalpur district beyond the river Ganga have been described as follows in the *Final Report on the Survey and Settlement Operations in the District of Bhagalpur* (1912):—

> "The northern portion of the district is an alluvial plain resembling in general features the adjoining districts of Monghyr and Darbhanga, and to some extent, Purnea. The most fertile parts of this tract are the western

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* *District Census Handbook of Saharsa*, Vol. IV, 1951, p. 2.

† *Census of India*, 1961, Pt. IIA, p. 46.

portions of *thanas* Supaul and Madhipura* and the whole of *thana* Bangaon. This is largely a rice-growing tract and resembles the adjacent part of Darbhanga. Being so much dependent on the winter rice crop, which is liable to suffer from drought in years of scanty rainfall, and from floods from the Tiljuga and Dhimra rivers when the rainfall is heavy, it is also the part of the district most often affected by famine.

"The eastern parts of Supaul and Madhipura *thanas* bordering on the Kosi resemble in some respects the adjoining *thanas* of Purnea district. Pratabganj and the North Supaul bordering on Nepal are on the whole less fertile than the remainder of the district. The soil contains a greater proportion of sand and is in some places covered by sand deposits which render it absolutely unfit for cultivation.

"*Thana* Kishanganj and the south of Madhipura form an area the characteristics of which have varied very much at different periods. At the time of permanent settlement it appears to have been a comparatively populous and fertile tract. At the time of the Revenue Survey a considerable part of the area near the banks of the Kosi was covered with high grass jungle, but the Revenue Surveyor considered it to be 'in a decidedly prosperous state and well cultivated'. 'The climate', he added, 'is salubrious although a little damper than of *pargana* Nisankpur Kurha'.

"These remarks would certainly not apply to the state of the area ten or twelve years ago. By that time the river Kosi had thrown off numerous offshoots which traversed the whole of Kishanganj *thana,* flowed into the Tiljuga which itself flows into the Kosi at a point on the boundary between Purnea and Bhagalpur. These branches of Kosi were continually changing in number and position, and the annual floods to which they gave rise rendered the greater part of the area almost uninhabitable. Many villages were deserted by their inhabitants and the area under cultivation decreased. Formerly there was a good road from Lattipur Factory to Kishanganj. This was breached in so many places by the river that it became practically useless, and all attempts to keep it in repair were given up. The area covered with *Jhaua* and grass jungle increased, and large tracts remained under water throughout the year. The jungles were full of deer and wild pig and even tigers, leopards and buffaloes were to be found

* Madhipura is also mentioned as Madhepura.

occasionally. The swampy portions were covered in the cold weather with innumerable flocks of wild duck, so that the place became an ideal one for sport of all kinds.

"During the last ten years or so, the area has been gradually returning to its former state. Offshoots from the Kosi still flow through it, but not in such numbers as formerly. The annual floods are of less extent, and the greater of the tract now dries up in the cold weather. The deposits left by Kosi floods have rendered the lands extraordinarily fertile and *raiyats* have been attracted from long distances to come and cultivate them. The area is still flooded and very unhealthy in the rains and is infested by a most ravenous species of mosquito so that very few of the new *raiyats* have as yet settled in it.

"They come merely to sow their fields and return to their homes until it is time to cut the crops. The floods are becoming less year by year, and if the present rate of improvement is maintained, there is no doubt that new villages will be built, and the former prosperity of the tract will return. This, however, is contingent on the behaviour of the Kosi river, and there is every reason to believe that what happened to Kishanganj during the last twenty five years has happened before, and will happen again. Throughout North Bhagalpur and Western Purnea every deposit of sand, no matter at what distance from the present course of the Kosi, is popularly attributed to that river, and there is little doubt that its influence has extended over the greater part of these districts which have been built up to their present level by deposits of sand and silt from the Kosi floods. The area which is being flooded at any period is having its level raised, and will after a time be free from the floods while some other area in turn undergoes the same process."*

The picture of the topography as given above substantially remains the same excepting that the Kosi river has wrought more ravages by her floods. The western part of the district had become full of *kans* and *pater* jungles and wild animals. Large tracts of fertile lands had been rendered useless for cultivation by deposits of thick sand brought in by Kosi. The *anchals*, namely, Nirmali, Dharhara I, Dharhara II, Kishanpur I and Kishanpur II were badly affected by the Kosi floods. The eastern part of the district is slightly less affected by the Kosi ravages.

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* *Final Report on the Survey and Settlement Operations in the Bhagalpur District* (1902—10), published in 1912, pp. 1—3

There are innumerable channels of Kosi river which have now become dead. An aerial flight over Saharsa district shows the country spread as a pan-cake intersected by numerous ridges and channels. There are no highlands in the district excepting a few embankments and the old Bir *bandh*. In their desperation the villagers used to throw small embankments for immediate protection and some of them are still to be seen. Due to the westward swing of the river Kosi and the construction of Kosi Barrage and several embankments, areas like Sonbarsa, Madhepura, Singheshwar, Murliganj and Kishanganj *thanas* are now free from Kosi ravages and the sanded tracts are getting back their fertility.

The slope of the countryside is generally from north to south with a slight inclination eastward. There were a large number of marshes scattered throughout the district. They mostly occurred on either side of the river Loran in Madhepura subdivision. Some of the marshes still remain. A number of the marshes have now been reclaimed or have been filled up and yielding some crops. Large areas of waste lands full of *kans* and *pater* in Supaul and Madhepura subdivisions have been reclaimed by tractors and are yielding crops. The Kosi Project is also implementing a number of canals to irrigate Darbhanga, Purnea and Saharsa districts besides portions of Nepal. With the full implementation of the Kosi Project the face of the countryside is likely to change substantially. Kosi Project has been described elsewhere.

River System and Water Resources.

A separate chapter has been devoted to Kosi river and Kosi Project. Kosi river overshadows the river system of the district and forms the main river which counts and has ruled the economy of the district. The history of the floods in this district is the history of the Kosi floods. Most of the other important rivers of the district join the Kosi and do not require more than a very brief reference.

The river system consists of a large number of Himalayan affluents. They have mostly a direction from north to south with a slight inclination eastwards. The larger of these rise among the foothills of Nepal, and after a tortuous course fall into the Khagri which itself joins the Kosi.

The principal of these rivers are the Tiljuga, the Bati, the Dhimra, the Talakea, the Parwan, the Dhusan, the Chalausi, the Loran, the Katna, the Daus and the Ghagri. The description of these rivers in the last *District Gazetteer of Bhagalpur* published in 1911 remains almost the same and may be repeated.

"*Tiljuga*.—The Tiljuga rises in the hills of the Sub-Tarai of Nepal, and enters Saharsa* at the most northern point of *pargana* Naredigar; after which it forms the western

* The word Saharsa has been substituted in place of Bhagalpur as necessary in the text (P. C. R. C.).

boundary between Saharsa and Darbhanga down to the south-west corner of *pargana* Malhani Gopal, from which it passes into *pargana* Kabkhand as far as the village of Tilkeswar. Here it bends south-east across the great Monghyr *pargana* of Pharkiya, and again entering Saharsa near Balhar, crosses *pargana* Chhai in a due easterly direction and falls into the Kosi a little to the south-west of Saura Gadi. At Rawal in *pargana* Naredigar, fifteen miles from Nepal, it sends off a number of channels or *dhars*, which irrigate and drain the greater part of this *pargana* and of the north of Malhani Gopal. It receives its first affluent, the Balan, from Tirhut at Rasiari, where it also formerly bifurcated, the two branches uniting again four miles south-east of Bhaja. The western branch was then the larger of the two, but of late years it has gradually silted up, and is now only navigable in the rains for boats of five hundred *maunds* up to Bagta, beyond which it is only a shallow drainage channel and soon completely disappears. Near Tilkeswar the Dhimra falls into the Tiljuga, bringing a great quantity of water. Before it re-enters Saharsa from Pharkiya, it receives through the Katna the united waters of the Talaba, Parwan, Dhusan and Loran. The Tiljuga is navigable for boats of two thousand *maunds* or seventy tons burthen up to Tilkeswar, and beyond that for boats of a quarter of that tonnage up to Dighia within ten miles of the Nepal frontier. This river forms the main water communication of the north-west of the district. Mr. Wickes reported in 1874 that, as a rule, a number of embankments are annually constructed across the Tiljuga for irrigation purposes from Rasiari upwards, and that they greatly interfere with the value of the river as a navigable channel; for although the first heavy flood breaches them, it only partially removes them, and boats, particularly those travelling upstream, have great difficulty in passing. In some cases the flood bursts through the embankment near either bank leaving an island in the middle of the stream with a narrow dangerous passage on each side of it; in other places the centre of the embankment gives way and a narrow channel is formed in the middle of the stream with the ends of the broken *bandh* projecting into the river like a spur on each side causing an almost impossible rapid; and, again, in a few instances, the whole of the upper portion of the *bandh* is carried away, leaving the foundation which bars the river as a sunken weir right across its whole width.

"*Bati.*—The Bati was described by the Revenue Surveyor* as being nothing more than an arm of the Tiljuga, and frequently called by its name. He says it formerly separated from the parent stream at the village of Bela on the north-western boundary; but this channel has long since been dried up, and, in many places, can scarcely be discerned, so that it could never have been very deep. The river, however, seems to have had a separate source in the north of *pargana* Naredigar, the old bed referred to being only one of those cross channels, which join most of the rivers of this part of the country, at various points in their course. It falls into the Tiljuga at Gopalpur by the Ladua *khal.*

"*Dhimra.*—The Dhimra is an insignificant stream when it enters this district, rapid during the rains, but in the hot weather in many places dry, the intermediate patches of water being stagnant. It rises in Nepal, and for the first ten miles of its course in Saharsa divides the *parganas* of Dhaphar and Naredigar. After flowing south through the latter *pargana* and then through Malhani Gopal and Uttarkhan, it empties itself into the Tiljuga at Tilkeswar. It is very liable to freshets from the hills, and most of the channel is protected by embankments, which along its lower reaches have been allowed of recent years to fall into decay through the neglect and apathy of the riparian landowners. For the last twelve miles of its course, it has a remarkably wide bed, through the middle of which a meagre stream flows when there is no flood.

"*Talaba.*—The Talaba seems to have formerly occupied a much more important place in the river system of the district than it now does. Its old bed, which is still clearly discernible from bank to bank, measures from fifteen to twenty chains across. Judging by the direction of its larger *dhars* (branches), it is probable that it once received the waters now carried by the lower Tiljuga. Its upper course quickly dries up after the cessation of the rains and the bed is annually cultivated, the land producing rich crops with very little tillage. It forms the western boundary of *pargana* Nisankpur Kurha. After its union with the Parwan and the Loran it loses its name to form, with them, the Katna.

"*Parwan and Dhusan.*—The Parwan and Dhusan rivers both take their rise in the south-eastern corner of *pargana* Naredigar, the former from a *dhar* of the old Talaba river, and the latter from a spring near the village of

* Report published in 1869.

Belarhata. They pursue different courses about two and a half or three miles apart, until their waters mingle at Singeswarsthan, where there is a temple of Siva Mahadeo. Their point of confluence is considered a place of much sanctity and several thousands of devout Hindus resort to the shrine in February to pay their devotions, bringing with them small quantities of Ganges water, which they throw over the image of the God. At this place the Dhusan loses its own name; and the mingled waters, under the name of the Parwan, flow on towards the south. This river, after a tortuous course of nearly thirty miles, forms the Sahsal swamp, the outlet from which under the name of the Katna (an appellation which indicates an artificial origin) flows into *pargana* Pharkiya, a mile and a quarter below the point where that *pargana* meets *parganas* Chhai and Nisankpur Kurha. The Parwan is alone navigable.

"*Chalauni*.—The Chalauni rises from a marsh in *pargana* Harawat, enters *pargana* Naredigar at the village of Thalla Garhi, and, flowing close to the common boundary of both *parganas* for five miles, suddenly swerves off to the right, and then runs very tortuously towards the south, throwing out many channels, and finally falling into the Loran at the village of Pandua. It is principally used for irrigation. A few small boats ply on it for two or three months in the year, but they are only fishing and passenger skiffs.

"*Loran*.—The Loran rises in a swamp on the eastern boundary of *pargana* Nisankpur Kurha, near the Purnea boundary and, after a course of twelve miles, is joined by the Chalauni. It then runs to the southern limit of the *pargana*, touches on the Sahsal swamp, and mingling with the Parwan, forms the Katna.

"*Katna*.—The Katna, as already mentioned, is formed by the united waters of the Talaba, Parwan, and Loran. It is a considerable river, bounding the Chhai *pargana* for about four miles on its north-eastern extremity, and then running into *pargana* Pharkiya of Monghyr. It joins the Tiljuga eight miles from the western frontier of Saharsa; and the two streams combine to form the great river Ghagri. The Katna is navigable for boats of four hundred *maunds* (or fourteen and a half tons) throughout its whole course which is only about twelve miles.

"*Daus*.—The Daus is described in the following passage by the Revenue Surveyor Mr. Pemberton:—'Tradition states that it rises in the Murang of Nepal, and runs parallel with the Bir *bandh*, or embankment, of *pargana*

Dhaphar into Harawat; but I must confess when I surveyed *pargana* Dhaphar I could find no trace of a river at the place described. I found a small dry channel close to the *bandh,* but this appeared to have been formed by clay having been dug out at different times to repair it. My own opinion is that the Daus is nothing more than a small arm of the Herun or Kusi: it is impossible to say which, as these rivers have been united since 1847; and that it is fed by *dhars* from them. It enters *pargana* Dhaphar from Nisankpur Kurha, and runs in a very narrow channel near its eastern boundary for about seven miles, when it spreads out into a swamp varying from twenty to sixty or sixty-five chains wide, and maintains this width until it empties itself into the Ghagri river. A great part of the swamp dries up during the cold and hot weather, and is cultivated with indigo, yielding an exceedingly fine crop; but the produce cannot at all times be depended on, as the river is subject to inundations from the Kosi. When these occur, the planters are severe sufferers. The tradition concerning the source of this river is, however, supported by the evidence of Dr. Buchanan-Hamilton, who describes the Bir *bandh* as commencing from the source of the Daus. The indigo cultivation has disappeared with the ruin of the old factories, and rice is now largely grown in its place'.

"*Ghagri.*—The Ghagri is usually described as consisting only of the lower reaches of the Tiljuga; but as the new name is assumed after the influx of the Katna, which brings with it the drainage of half of the northern portion of the district, it seems more fit to regard it as a distinct river. It enters this district from *pargana* Pharkiya, and passes due east through Chhai to join the Kosi."*

GEOLOGY AND MINERALS.

The district is purely alluvial and alluvium, new and old, are noticed. Owing to frequent floods particularly in Kosi river large deposits of thick sand occur in the Kosi-affected zones. Kosi river is notorious for bringing in a huge quantity of sand and a little silt.

The district is within the earthquake zone of intensity. The district was affected by earthquake in 1803, 1833, 1897 and 1934. The Bihar Earthquake of 1934 had affected various parts of the district. Portions of Supaul and Sadar subdivisions were affected badly. Panchgachhia, a flourishing village, lost the mansions of the local zamindars. Several buildings at Madhepura and Supaul towns were also damaged.

The district has no known mineral resources.

* *District Gazetteer of Bhagalpur* (1911), pp. 5 to 6.

Flora and Botany.

The physical features, climate and rainfall and the particular impact of the Kosi floods have determined the botany of the district. While Kosi ravages destroyed the trees of timber value and also large-sized fruit trees like mangoes, etc., the district had been left with a luxuriant growth of bamboos, *kans* and *pater*, hardy small trees like *babul, jhaua, harjora,* etc., waterberries like *makhana, ramdana* and *motha* grass. The district also grows *sabai* grass, *munj* and varieties of canc, etc. Water hyacinth grows in abundance choking up water pools. The cultivated crops have been mentioned in the text on "Agriculture and Irrigation".

Amongst the fruit trees particular mention has to be made of the different varieties of mango. Mango groves of this district which found mention in the *Final Report of Survey and Settlement Operations of Bhagalpur District* (1912) and the last *District Gazetteer of Bhagalpur* (1911) were badly affected by Kosi floods and many of the groves in different areas were completely destroyed. New groves have been growing in Sonbarsa and Murliganj areas. Even now a very large quantity of mango is produced in the district.

The other trees and plants that are common include *mahua*, jackfruit, plantain, tamarind, *bair, jamun* and *kathjamun*. *Khajur* and *tal* trees are not very common.

Lichi, guava, lemon, water-melon, cocoanut and betel-nut are also grown. Not much serious effort was made before to develop horticulture. Efforts are now being made to grow more papayas, guavas, lemons, etc.

Sal, sisam and *semul* trees are found but not very common.

Flowering trees like *amaltas, krishnachura, paras* (flame of the forest), *champak*, etc., are now being grown once again. The winter annuals could grow very well.

There are no forests now. It has been mentioned elsewhere that *kans* and *pater* jungles which used to cover thousands of different varieties of deer are now almost cleared.

Fauna.

The denudation of the forests, the reclamation of the *kans* infested waste lands and indiscriminate *shikar* in the past have led to the decline of tiger, panther, hog-deer, *chital*, wild boar, etc. At one time wild buffaloes in flocks, and rhinoceroses used to come from Nepal. There are still (June, 1963) some wild animals in the *kans* and *pater* jungles within the Kosi embanked areas. They usually retire to the foothills of Nepal in the month of April and after. *Nilgais* or blue-bulls are still found but not as plenty as before. Hare and *khikhir* (a member of cat species) are also found.

Jackals, monkeys, wolves and flying foxes are also common. Several deadly species of reptiles like cobra and *karait*. and various kinds of lizards and inguanas are also found.

Saharsa once abounded in crocodiles. A particular wandering caste known as *Tiars* made a living out of killing crocodiles by attacking them when the crocodiles were under water. Crocodiles cannot open their jaws while they are under water and the *Tiars* used to twist their neck and kill them with mallets.

Avifauna.

The following birds have been recorded from the district of Saharsa:—

Jungle crow, house crow, treepie, crow-pheasant, grey hornbill, little brown dove, grey partridge, white-breasted water-hen, bronze-winged jacana, curlew-stint, black ibis, glossy ibis, white-necked stork, cattle egret, pond heron, pink-headed duck, silli or cotton teal, lesser white-fronted goose, large whistling teal (dendrocygna bicolor), brahminy duck, eastern grey duck, marbled teal, and eastern goosander.

The reclamation of the water pools and indiscriminate shooting have led to the extinction of pink-headed duck, marbled teal, copper-breasted teal and floricans. Various species of ducks, mallard, *nakta,* comb duck, and geese do not come out now so profusely. Visitors have declined very perceptibly. Drainage of the *chaurs,* reclamation of waterlogged areas and shrubs, indiscriminate butchering of the birds are some of the reasons.

The Climate of Saharsa District.

The district has a humid climate except for a dry summer. The cold season is from November to February and the summer season is from March to May. The south-west monsoon season is from June to September, October being a transitional month.

Rainfall.

Records of rainfall in the district are available for four stations for periods ranging from 39 to 90 years. The details of the rainfall at these stations and for the district as a whole are given in Tables 1 and 2. The average annual rainfall in the district is 1385.4 mm. (54.54″). The rainfall increases generally from south-west to the north-east. The rainfall in the south-west monsoon from June to September constitutes 82 per cent of the annual rainfall. July is the month with the highest rainfall which is nearly a quarter of the annual rainfall. The variation in the annual rainfall from year to year is not large. During the fifty years 1901 to 1950, the highest annual rainfall amounting to 144 per cent of the normal occurred in 1916, while the lowest rainfall which was only 44 per cent of the normal occurred in 1908. In the same fifty-year period, rainfall was less than 80 per cent of the normal in eight years, two of them consecutive. It will be seen from Table 2 that the annual rainfall was between 1100 and 1600 mm. (43.31″ and 62.99″) in 31 years out of 50.

On an average there are 59 rainy days (i.e., days with rainfall of 2.5 mm.—10 cents or more) in a year in the district.

The heaviest rainfall in 24 hours recorded at any station in the district was 281.9 mm. (11.10″) at Supaul in 1905 September 30.

Temperature.

There is no meteorological observatory in the district. However, conditions are similar to those obtaining in the nearby districts where there are meteorological observatories. The cold season starts in November when temperatures begin to drop fairly rapidly. Usually January is the coldest month, when judging from the temperatures as recorded at the observatories, the mean daily maximum temperature is of the order of 24°C (48°F). During cold waves which affect the district in association with the passage of western disturbances across North India the minimum temperature may go down to 2° or 3°C (35°F). From March, temperatures begin to rise steadily and April is usually the hottest month. The daily maximum temperature in this month and sometimes in May reach 42° to 43°C (109°F). With the onset of the south-west monsoon early in June, day temperatures drop slightly, while the night temperatures continue to be high. After September both day and night temperatures begin to decrease slowly, the drop in night temperatures being comparatively more rapid.

Humidity.

The atmosphere is very humid in the monsoon season and to a slightly lesser extent in October and the winter months. The air is comparatively drier in the summer season.

Cloudiness.

In the winter and the summer months, skies are generally clear or lightly clouded. Cloudiness increases in May and in the monsoon season skies are heavily clouded to overcast.

Winds.

Winds are generally light, but in April and May and during the monsoon season there is a little strengthening of the wind. The winds blow mainly from directions between north-east and south-east in May and the monsoon season. In October and November winds are variable in direction and in the rest of the year winds are mainly south-westerly or westerly.

Special Weather Phenomenon.

Storms and depressions which originate in the Bay of Bengal particularly those in the late monsoon and post-monsoon period sometimes more in a northerly direction and affect the district and its neighbourhood causing widespread heavy rain and strong winds. Thunderstorms may occur throughout the year, their frequency being highest in the monsoon months and least in the winter. Some of the thunderstorms in April and May are violent. Occasional fogs are experienced in the winter season, during morning.

TABLE

Normal and extremes

Station.	No. of years of data.		January.	February.	March.	April.	May.	June.	July.	August.
1	2		3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Madhipura*	39	*a*	8.1	15.2	12.2	18.8	83.1	223.8	343.9	316.2
		b	0.7	1.4	1.1	1.5	4.4	9.6	14.1	13.2
Supaul ..	50	*a*	10.9	17.5	15.0	25.9	89.4	243.6	338.6	319.0
		b	1.1	1.4	1.1	1.6	4.5	9.7	14.1	13.7
Pratapganj	49	*a*	5.8	11.9	12.7	28.2	93.5	250.7	377.7	288.8
		b	0.7	1.2	0.9	2.1	5.3	9.8	14.1	13.8
Bhimnagar	29	*a*	7.1	8.6	8.1	42.2	135.4	255.2	338.3	257.3
		b	0.8	0.9	0.6	2.3	6.1	10.3	11.8	10.9
Saharsa (District)		*a*	8.0	13.3	12.0	28.0	100.3	246.1	349.6	295.3
			0.8	1.2	0.9	1.9	5.1	9.9	13.5	12.9

*Based on all available data up to 1958

†Years given in brackets.

(*a*) Normal rainfall in mm.

(*b*) Average number of rainy days (days with rain of 2.5 mm. or more).

rain fall.

Sep.	Oct.	Nov.	Dec.	Annual.	Highest annual rainfall as percentage of normal and year.*	Lowest annual rainfall as percentage of normal and year.†	Heaviest rainfall 24 hours. Amount (mm.).	Date.
11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19
250.9	80.3	11.9	3.1	1367.5	151 (1931)	41 (1908)	241.3	1879, Sept. 13.
9.6	3.1	0.6	0.2	59 5	..	..	..	.
257.1	74.2	9.4	2.5	1403.1	153 (1916)	43 (1908)	281.9	1905, Sept. 30.
9.9	3.0	0.4	0.3	60.8	..	..	..	..
208.0	52.3	8.6	2.3	1340.2	182 (1916)	49 (1908)	266.7	1934, July 25.
8.7	2.1	0.5	0.2	59.4	.	..	..	..
269.7	85.1	11.4	1.8	1431.2	151 (1924)	50 (1940)	213.4	1951, Aug. 23.
9.3	2.4	0.5	0.2	56.1	..	..	..	.
246.4	73.0	10.3	2.3	1385.4	144 (1916)	44 (1908)	.	.
9.4	2.7	0.5	0.2	59.0	..	..	..	..

TABLE 2.

Frequency of Annual Rainfall in the District.

(Data 1901——1950.)

Range in mm.	Number of years.	Range in mm.	Number of years.
601—700	1	1301—1400	7
701—800	0	1401—1500	9
801—900	2	1501—1600	7
901—1000	1	1601—1700	6
1001—1100	4	1701—1800	3
1101—1200	4	1801—1900	0
1201—1300	4	1901—2000	2

CHAPTER II.

HISTORY.

GENERAL.

Saharsa was created a separate district on the 1st of April, 1954. Formerly, Saharsa had no independent status and parts of Saharsa were included in the old districts of Monghyr, Tirhut and Bhagalpur. After the British occupation of Bengal (which then included undivided Bengal, Bihar, Orissa and portions of Assam), Saharsa area underwent numerous changes. As early as 1793 a few villages from Tirhut were added to the district of Bhagalpur, which also included Saharsa. In 1838 three *parganas* of Naredigar, Malhanigopal and Nishankhpur Kurha were transferred from Tirhut to Bhagalpur. During the same period the *parganas* of *Kabakhand* and *Uttarakhand* were also added. These latter two *parganas* were permanently transferred to Bhagalpur from Monghyr for all administrative purposes. The whole of North Bhagalpur with the exception of Bihpur, Naugachia and Gopalpur police-stations ultimately went over to the newly created district of Saharsa in 1954. The creation of this district was a great event. The present district of Saharsa is bounded on the north by the Himalayas and the independent State of Nepal; on the south by the district of Monghyr; on the east by the district of Purnea and on the west by the district of Darbhanga. The administrative headquarters are at Saharsa proper. The physical features of the district assume the aspects of the sandy flats of Purnea. A large part of the district till recently was subjected to annual floods and inundations by a host of rivers originating from the Himalayas. The sub-*terai* was noted for its rice cultivation before it was subjected to the vagaries of unpredictable Kosi which marred the prospect of a famous mart at Nathpur.

INFLUENCE OF GEOGRAPHICAL FACTORS ON THE HISTORY OF SAHARSA.

Like the district of Darbhanga, the district of Saharsa has been largely influenced by geographical factors. Since time immemorial, the district lay on the great highway from east to west and *vice versa* and the communication was possible not only by land but also by navigable rivers. Through Mithila (of which Saharsa formed a part) lay the highway of communication. It was very easy for armies to march from Bengal towards Tirhut along the north bank of the Ganga crossing Kosi and Gandak at some convenient point. All through the mediaeval period, Kosi was regarded as the indisputable boundary between Tirhut and Bengal. On this route lay the riverine tract of North Monghyr and North Bhagalpur including

the present district of Saharsa. Martin describes Narayanpur (Jalalgarh) in the district of Purnea as the frontier outpost of Kosi side.* The trade routes and consequently political aggression followed the convenient lines of communication and in Tirhut they were mainly determined by river channels besides the land routes. Saharsa district has, therefore, been considered important as it lay on the highway between Bengal and Tirhut.

The geographical features have enabled the district to maintain a distinct individuality of its own and its close affinity with the region of Tirhut. The geographical situation, partly disturbed by the occasional ravages of the Kosi, assumed a certain amount of security and seclusion and an almost unbroken continuity of life and pattern and culture. Like other parts of North Bihar, Saharsa has been one of the great centres of agricultural produce. The surplus agricultural products were sufficient till recently to meet the bare minimum of the district. Generally all the characteristics of the districts of Darbhanga and Purnea can very well apply to this district.

ANTIQUITY OF THE DISTRICT.

The district formed a part of Mithila in ancient times. According to the traditional account the ancient province of Tirabhukti included the modern districts of Muzaffarpur, Darbhanga, Saharsa, Purnea, North Monghyr, North Bhagalpur** and a large portion of Nepal *terai*. The *Sabhaparva* of the *Mahabharata* contains a story relating to the visit of Bhima to a place called Biratpur (a village of that name is still extant in the district of Saharsa). He reached this place without crossing Kosi and that shows that Biratpur lay on the west of Kosi. According to the Buddhist sources, beyond the confines of river Kamla, lay the territory of Anguttarap. Like modern North Bhagalpur and North Monghyr, the territories of Anga, north of the Ganga in ancient times were known as Anguttarap. It is thus evident that in the age of the Buddha, the district of Saharsa was included in the Anguttarap region, which seems to have included portions of the present district of Darbhanga, parts of North Monghyr and North Bhagalpur. There was a famous Janapada of Apana in the Anguttarap region where Buddha stayed for about a month and delivered some of his important sermons. It is very difficult to identify this village or the region of Anguttarap at the present moment but it can be ascertained with some amount of certainty that the present district of Saharsa, with some of its ancient sites, formed an important part of that region.***

* Cf. R. K. Choudhary—*History of Muslim Rule in Tirhut*; Martin—*Eastern India*—III,82.

** R. K. Choudhary—(i) *History of Bihar*; (ii) *Vaidehi-Visheshanka of* 1960, S. N. Singh—*History of Tirhut*; Upendra Thakur—*History of Mithila*; P. C. Roy Choudhury—(edited) *New Gazetteer of Darbhanga.*

*** Rahul Sankirtayana—*Buddhacharya*; G. P. Malalsekhar—*Dictionary of Pali proper names*; R. K. Choudhary—(i) *G. D. College, Bulletin series no.* 2; (ii) *Siddhartha.*

EARLY HISTORY.

Since the district has been under the cruel control of the capricious and disastrous Kosi for the last half a century or so, it is futile to try for the existence of some important historical or pre-historical sites. It is true that the whole district was dotted with mounds and innumerable materials of antiquarian interests were available throughout the district to earlier explorers. Thanks to the efforts of some early Europeans, some important historical facts and landmarks have been preserved here and there and it is on the basis of these collections that we can weave out a connected account of the district. Since Saharsa formed a part of ancient Mithila, it is natural to suppose that some important historical events must have taken place here

Mithila, capital of the Videha, lay in the east. Mithila also stood for the kingdom of Videha. In the Puranas there are mythological explanations about the name of Mithila. It may be mentioned that it was named after Mithi, son of the founder of the Videhas, Nimi, also known as Videha*. Mithila has been identified with the small town of Janakpur within the Nepal border. Tirabhukti and Videha are synonymous terms.@ It was during the time of the Imperial Guptas that the whole region came to be known as Tirabhukti; Mithila has been a holy land because of its association with Sita. There was a migration of Aryans into this land from across the Sadanira and this story of the migration is recorded in the *Satpath Brahmana*. It was as a result of this migration that the whole of North Bihar was aryanised. No authentic account, with particular reference to this district. is available but since it formed a part of North Bihar, it can be presumed that Saharsa was aryanised as a result of that migration of the Aryans from the west. As a part of Anga on the other side of the river, it is possible that the Angas might have also occupied a portion of the district. The Angas are mentioned in the *Atharvaveda* (V. 22.14). The Angas are also associated with the blind sage Dirghatamas. The *Sabhaparva* of the *Mahabharata* describes the conquest of Bhima in Eastern India. Bhima conquered the King of *Kausiki-Kachcha*. From the *Mahabharata* and the *Kiratajanakirti*, we learn that north-eastern part of Bihar was once inhabited by a people known as *Kiratas*. They were a powerful people and they had strong cultural background and the *Mahabharata* throws flood of light on the *Kirata* culture. Formerly they were called aboriginal hill tribes.** According to a local tradition, there was a long drawn struggle between various people and the *Kiratas*. Raja Virat is said to have possessed a *Kirata* wife from the Morang or the *Terai* area. Raja Virat is said to have granted refuge to the five Pandavas during their exile in his fort. The famous village of Biratpur in Saharsa is associated with this legend.

* History and Culture of Indian People. Vol. I, the Vedic Age, p. 276.

@ S. B. Chaudhari : Ethnic Settlements in Ancient India, p. 164 and F. N. I.

** J. A. S. B-IV (1908), pp. 267—70.

During the early Buddhist period, the district seems to have acquired some importance. We know that Vaisali was the strongest republic in North Bihar and beyond that lay the famous territory of Anguttarap. There was a small Janapad, named Apana, in Anguttarap and it included a portion of the district of Saharsa. Whether there was a republic or not, it is difficult to say but this much is certain that the people of this area were outside the influence of the Lichchavis. Various sites in the district, now completely eroded and destroyed by the Kosi, viz., Biratpur, Budhiagarhi, Budhmaghat, Buddhadi, Pithahi and Mathahi are associated with Buddhism. Before the advent of Kosi in this district, these sites supplied important materials and buildings and during the period of erosion big buildings and huge constructions from beneath the earth were noticed falling into the river. Images of various descriptions were noticed by persons of the locality. Local traditions confirm that Lord Buddha and Lord Mahavira passed through the district in course of their travelling mission. Since the whole of North Bihar was stirred with the teachings of these two great reformers, it is only natural to infer that the people of this district must have actively participated in the propagation of these new faiths (600 B.C.—320 A.D.).

HISTORY OF SAHARSA.

Both Anga and North Bihar including Saharsa continued to be independent till the early part of the sixth century B.C. For sometime Magadha remained an integral part of Anga King Bhattiya of Magadha was defeated in war by King Brahmadatta of Anga but in no time the prosperity of Anga was on the wane. Bimbisar (son of Bhattiya) revenged his father's defeat by putting Brahmadatta to death and annexing Anga to his empire. Though Anga seems to have passed into the hands of the Magadhan sovereign, Anguttarap seems to have continued as an independent Janapada and western portion of Supaul as a part of Mithila continued to enjoy the independence, characteristic of the whole of North Bihar till it was finally conquerred and annexed by Ajatasatru. The Raja of Anga,* during the time of Buddha, was nothing more than a wealthy nobleman who granted a pension to a Brahman—Ajatasatru made Champa his capital but that was transferred to Pataliputra by his son, Udayina. It was Ajatasatru who finally defeated the Lichchavis and other independent republics of North Bihar and annexed the whole territory to the Kingdom of Magadha. Magadhan empire was growing with rapidity and it was in no time that the whole of Bihar (both north and south) was brought under the Magadhan hegemony. Flickering vestiges of independences, that might have been there, were compelety subdued by the Nandas who are credited with having conquered both the Angas and the Maithilas. To crown all came the empire of the Mauryas.

*Rhys Davids—*Buddhist India* (1908), pp. 23-24.

With the establishment of the Mauryan rule, we stand on a secure footing of history in so far as this district is concerned. It was in the first decade of this century that a hoard of 58 punch marked coins was discovered from Gorhoghat (a protected site of the Archaeological Survey of India, now ravaged by the rapacious Kosi). The hoard contained a good number of varieties. These coins were noticed in the *Journal of the Bihar and Orissa Research Society Journal in* 1919. It may be noted here with satisfaction that some of the legends on these coins are found on the coins of the Mauryan period and hence they can be safely assigned to the Mauryan period. What has been described as the "Texila Mark"* on the punch marked coins occurs on the reverse of eight of the Gorhoghat coins (p. 469). Mr. E. H. C. Walsh holds that Gorhoghat coins are of the Mauryan period.† The discovery of Gorhoghat coins in the first decade of our century stands further confirmed by the further discovery of the same type of coins from Patuaha (district Saharsa) by Prof. R. K. Choudhary in 1958. The pot had 40 coins but only nine could be procured for study.‡ Like Gorhoghat Patuaha is a very old village but now stands ravaged by the Kosi. These coins were discovered in the wake of the construction of a new macadamised road running from Saharsa to Madhepura. In North Bihar, the largest hoard of punch§ marked coins was found at Purnea and small hoards from Lauriya Nandangarh (Champaran), Muzaffarpur, Asurgarh (Darbhanga), Jaimanglagarh, Bahera and other places. The prevalence of punch marked coins on such a large scale in North Bihar is a remarkable feature. The full weight of the coins is not represented by any of these coins. Gorhoghat coins do not weigh more than 53 grains. Mark no. 55 and 56 of the Gorhoghat coins consist of a central circular boss with a crescent on either side. Many of the Gorhoghat coins are die-struck. The Patuaha coins are blurred and do not admit of verification. On the basis of legends, the Patuaha coins may be assigned to the reigns of the Nandas, Bindusara, Asoka and Dasaratha. In course of his exploration of some of the archaeological sites of Saharsa district, Prof. R. K. Chaudhary came across some pieces of northern black polished ware (N. B. P. pieces) pieces near Mahisi and its surroundings.

Various ancient sites of the district are indicative of the historical importance of the area. The Asurgarh of Darbhanga (in the Madhepura police-station) is connected with another fort called Chanaurgarh, in the east, lying in the Supaul subdivision of the district of Saharsa. Punch marked coins were also obtained from Asurgarh and its connections with a place in Supaul subdivision is helpful in so far as the study of this district is concerned. Some villages and places of Saharsa are associated with Pauranic legends

* Cunningham—*Coins of Ancient India*, p. 56 for details.

† *JBORS* XXV, pp. 7-8.

‡ *JBRS*—XLIII, p. 376 ff.

§ *Memoirs of the Archaeological Survey of India* no. 62.

and stories and in the absence of concrete historical evidence, it is not possible to accept all of them in toto. The Mauryans were supplanted by the Sungas and the Kanvas and there does not seem to have been any major political change in this district. The Angas and the Maithilas were under Magadha. Pundravardhana seems to have been the seat of heretics (of course, in the Buddhist sense of the term). Pundravardhana was the co-terminus of the Anguttarap—these two territories seem to have met somewhere near modern Banmankhi. According to Rajavalikathe, the reputed Jain author of *Kalpasutra* was born in a Brahman family of Kotikpura in Pundravardhana.@ The *Asokavadan* records the fact that Asoka put to death many naked heretics (possibly Jainas) of Pundravardhana.* Mauryan rule in this area stands firmly confirmed by a Mauryan pillar (hitherto unrecorded), on the Banmankhi—Forbesganj Road, at Sikligarh, and another in the Kishanganj police-station of the district of Saharsa. Since Saharsa was a border district even then, it is natural to suppose that the Mauryan administrators took special care to protect this district. The Sungas and the Kanvas passed off peacefully without marking any major change but the fact remains that the old central authority of the Nandas and the Mauryas was now a thing of the past.

Whether the Kushans conquered this portion or not is a matter deserving further study. It is true that some coins of the Kushans have been found in some parts of North Bihar but so far as Saharsa is concerned, it may be safely asserted that it was then under the control of an aboriginal tribe known as Bhars. K. P. Jayaswal has suggested that between the fall of the Kushans and the rise of the Guptas, the Bharasiva Nagas ruled over a major portions of North Bihar. The Bhars are associated with the districts of Darbhanga, North Monghyr** and Saharsa. A few Bhar families are yet extant at Raibhira near Singheshwarasthan. Unfortunately the valuable antiquities of Raibhira, said to be the stronghold of the Bhars in this district, have been washed away by the Kosi. The present landed property of Singheshwarasthan is said to have been under the Bhar kingdom. If Jayaswal's theory of the Bharasivas being so called because they carried the load of Siva on their shoulders be accepted, a conjecture may be hazarded that the Bhars of Raibhira were the descendants of those Bharasivas who ruled for about two hundred years after the fall of the Kushans. In some of the territories of Darbhanga and Saharsa, they seem to have enjoyed some authority down to the fifteenth century A.D. As rulers they came to be regarded as Kshatriyas. The famous geographer Ptolemy has suggested that a people named 'Maroundae' inhabited the land

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@ K. A. N. Sastri—Age of the Nandas and Mauryas, p. 161.

* *Revised Gazetteer of Purnea*, 1962 (edited by P. C. Roy Choudhury).

** For Bhars—*see* an article by R. K. Chaudhary in the *Spark*; and *History of Begusarai* published in the *Ramcharitra Abhinandan Granth.*

between Mahananda and Gandak.* Ptolemy must have based his account on some definite source now lost to us. To the west of Mahananda lay the territory of Pundravardana and Anguttarap and Maroundae might have occupied this land for sometime. They might have lived side by side with the Bharasivas or they might have frequented this area through the riverine tract for purposes of trade, etc. Megasthenes also referred to the existence of a number of tribes in Eastern Bihar. It appears that the *Kiratas*, *Maroundae* and the *Bhars* had some connection with the district though no authentic history or any connected source material for the study of these problems is yet available It may be mentioned in this connection that in 1935 Late Pandit Vishnulal Jha Sashtri noticed a Brahmi inscription of the 1st century B.C. at Airaha (near Bhaptiahi) and brought the estampage of that inscription for examination by the Late K. P. Jayaswal. It is not known as to the whereabouts of the inscription now. It could not be located at the Patna Museum where it was said to have been deposited.

HISTORY OF SAHARSA BETWEEN 320 AND 1097 A.D.

Political instability gave way to centralised administration as soon as the curtain rose with the emergence of the powerful Gupta empire in India in 320 A.D. The whole of North Bihar came to be known as Tirabhukti (province) with its capital at Vaishali. Hence forward provinces came to be known as Bhukti and districts as Visaya. There was a good deal of economic activities in North Bihar as is evident from the seals discovered from Vaishali. In North Bihar there were two Bhuktis, viz., Tirabhukti (practically whole of North Bihar) and Pundravardhanbhukti (included portions of Saharsa, Purnea and a portion of North Bengal). The extent of Saharsa during the period under review was up to the confines of Pundravardhanbhukti which included some of its present areas. The archaeological discoveries disclose a highly developed form of Government and economic organisation. There was a Governor and under him there were Magistrates or District Officers. During the rule of the Guptas, Maharaja Sri Govinda Gupta was Governor of Tirabhukhti according to Mandasor inscription of Malava-Vikrama year 524†. According to Basarah seals, however, in Tirabhukti, Kumaramatya was entrusted with the district administration in subordination to Provincial Governor called Uparika.** It was during this period that a host of Chinese travellers visited North Bihar and found Buddhism on decline. Hieuntsang who visited this area during the reign of Harsha has left an account of the people of Pundravardhana which may very well apply to the district of

* R. K. Chaudhary "*Maroundae of Ptolemy and North Bihar*", in the Souvenir of the L. S. College Diamond Jubilee volume.

† Radha Kumud Mookerji; *Ancient India*, p. 271.

** R. K. Chaudhary: History of Bihar, p. 68 Cf. Govinda Gupta, a forgotten Gupta Emperor in the Proceedings of the Indian History Congress—Aligarh, 1960.

Saharsa in view of similar topographical conditions. The whole area was studded with tanks and groves (a scene that could be visible about three decades ago when Kosi had not devastated the area). The country west of Mahananda as far as the Gandak was occupied by the Vrijjis, a confederacy of tribes who had come in from the north many centuries before and held the tract between Ganga and Nepal. They were divided into several clans.

The Gupta empire had to face the shattering blow of the Hunas.‡ It is said that Mihirkula killed Vajra, son of Baladitya, the valiant hero of Magadha and extinguished the viceregal families of the *Dattas* (a section of Bengali and Maithila Kayasthas still extant in Tirhut and Bengal) of Pundravardhanbhukti. The vacuum created by the disappearance of the mighty Guptas, came to be utilised by all contemporary powers and there was a good deal of diplomatic manoeuvre on all fronts.** Taking advantage of the situation, the Varmans of Kamrupa (Assam) extended their authority up to the confines of the Kosi.†† Bhaskarvarman of Assam was a very powerful ruler and his seals have been found at Nalanda. He was a remarkable figure in contemporary politics and by taking advantage of the then disturbed political conditions, he extended his authority to a convenient point on the Kosi. Sasanka of Bengal also succeeded in extending his authority over the whole of North Bihar††† and it was possibly after his death that Harsha could acquire sovereignty over Magadha and Mithila. The decline of the Gupta seems to have given support to fissiparous tendencies in North Bihar and the Governors in their respective areas seem to have raised the banner of authority though under the cloak of subordination to the vanishing imperial authority. It fell to the lot of Harsha to subdue all of them and to bind them together for a very short time. The rule of Purnavarman over North Bihar included the present district of Saharsa. He is said to have preceded Harsha and succeeded Sasanka.* The death of Harsha in 647 A.D. once again let loose the forces of disintegration in North Bihar, and who ruled over this part of the district during this period of chaos and uncertainty, it is very difficult to say in the present state of our knowledge. The neutrality of the Varman king of Assam and the protracted war by a Kashmiri king on the Nepal-Purnea border (bordering on the district of Saharsa) and the invasion of Tirhut by the Chinese mission are inexplicable in nature.

‡ For details — R. K. Chaudhary—*The Huna Invasion of India* — in the Altekar volume of JBRS.

** H. C. Roy Chaudhury — *Political History of Ancient India* — for details also Sudhakar Chattopadhya — *Early History of North India.*

†† R. K. Chaudhary — *Nidopanpur Copper Plates* in the *Proceedings of the Indian History Congress Session of* 1959 (Gauhati).

††† R. K. Chaudhary — *History of Bihar.*

* History and Culture of the Indian People, Volume III. The Classical Age, pp. 124-25.

The sources at our disposal are so meagre and confusing that it is very difficult to distinguish between facts and fiction. We are, therefore, driven to the natural conclusions that the death of Harsha brought in its train either confusion or political unstability and thereby paving the way for ambitious fortune seekers to fish in the troubled water. Even the Chinese travellers like Hiuentsang, Itsing and Sungtun who visited Vaishali and Tirhut, do not say anything about the political authority in a specific manner and as such they do not help us materially in so far as the political history of the area is concerned.

Cultural Activities.

Political history apart, Gupta and the succeeding ages are important in so far as the cultural history of the district is concerned. There was a synthesis of different faiths and culture during the period under review. Classical Sanskrit emerged and it was perfected to such an excellence that it has been a glorious heritage for all of us. Mahayana Buddhism, after travelling across the Himalayas in Tibet and China returned to India in the form of Tantra and adopted Sanskrit as its medium of expression. It was during this period that the Maithili script also known as Vaivarta script was evolved from the Gupta script. Maithili script is said to be the script of Tantric Varnamala. Though the political suzerainty changed hands speedily, it had hardly any effect on the cultural life of the land which remained busy in the pursuit of learning and culture. Saharsa became an important centre of the Tantras. The cult of Tara, believed to be of Tibetan origin, has been very popular in the district. Mahisi has been a very famous seat of the Ugratara worship and is looked upon with great reverence by the people even today. Mahisi is said to have been the birth place of the great philosopher, Mandana Mishra. He attracted the great Sankaracharya who turned at last to be his disciple. The origin of Maithila tantricism may be traced to Mahisi. The site of the famous disputations between Sankar and Mandana is pointed out by persons at Mahisi situated on the bank of river Dhemura. It is said that the Chinacharatantra (preserved in the Raj library) contains an account of Mahisi. Local tradition suggests that the eyes of Sati fell in Mahisi and since then it became an important centre of the Tantric cult. R P. Chanda holds that though the Sakti cult was revealed in Gauda, it was popularised by the Maithilas.* *Nilasaraswati* of Mahisi may be identified with the tantric deity *Mahanilasaraswati* about whom we have a veiled reference in the Gaya inscription of Nayapala (*Urunilapadma*) (*see* R. K. Choudhary—*Inscriptions of Bihar*—p. 74). D. C. Sircar in his *Saktupithas* (p. 47) has referred to Ugradevi and its association with Mithila (p. 65). Mahisi has got the *pitha* of Ugratara. Ugratara, Bhavaditya and Baneshwar are established on triangular points (*Trikonayantra*)

* *Cf.* R. P. Chanda — *Indo-Aryan races.* R. K. Choudhary — *Exploration of Mahisi* — in the JBRS —XLIII — p. 390 ff : *Spark* — January 26, 1956.

and that indicates the tantric importance of Mahisi. Much of the remains, both in antiquity and *MSS*, have since been destroyed by fire and flood and hence no connected account of this site is available.

The trio of the ancient Indian philosophical thought, viz., Mandana, Vacaspati, and Udayanacharya, is associated with the district of Saharsa directly or indirectly. Mandana, Vacaspati and Udayanacharya are said to have belonged to this district. It was Vacaspati who wrote on all the six schools of Hindu philosophy and his *Bhamati* is yet considered to be a unique philosophical Belles-letters. The legendary king Adisura (claimed equally both by Bengal and Mithila) was a ruler of this district. D. C. Sircar asserts that no genuine ruler named Adisura is known from the Bengal sources. The only Adisura known to east Indian history is a petty chief who flourished in North Bihar in the ninth century A. D. Vacaspati Misra in his commentary (Nyayakanika) on Mandana Mishra's Vidhiviveka mentions Adisura as the ruling chief. Possibly Vacaspati was at his court then. Possibly he was a vassal under the Palas of Bengal and since the Palas were Buddhists, the Brahman thinkers gathered round Adisura in Eastern Mithila (Saharsa—Purnea border) for protection and encouragement. He settled some Kulin Brahmans in his territory and institution of kulinism in Mithila and Bengal is rightly assigned to this unknown legendary figure. Vacaspati was his court *pandit* and wrote some of his important commentaries there. It may be mentioned here that Mandana Mishra had established a Sanskrit *Matha* (college) at Mahisi and scholars from different parts of the country used to flock here. There is, therefore, no wonder that since time immemorial Mahisi has been the seat of Sanskrit learning and culture. Udayanacharya, one of the greatest exponents of the Nyaya system, had his seat at *Kariyaama** (in Madhepura subdivision) though the people of Darbhanga associate him with village Kariyon of the Samastipur subdivision. *Nyaya* and *Mimamsa* found favour with the people of the district and the above mentioned trio added glamour to these reputed disciplines of study. The tradition in Mahisi is that even parrots and maid servants could converse in excellent poetic Sanskrit and Sankaracharya was simply amazed to find such an intellectual atmosphere of the first water. Cultivation of learning was given the highest priority.

Mahisi continued to be the centre of tantric worship and studies in spite of the *Mimamsakas* and *Naiyyayikas*. History of the *Tantras* in Mithila is wrapped in mysteries. Out of the nine seats of the Mahasanghika School of Buddhism, the most important was that of *Bahusrutiyas* who gave a spiritual or supermundane character to Buddha's teachings.** The *Bahusrutiyas* had their say in Mithila

* S. N. Singh — *History of Tirhut* — for reference.

**R. K. Choudhary—(*i*) *Bihar, the Homeland of Buddhism*; (*ii*) *Siddhartha* (in Hindi)—It should be noted here that the *Mahasanghikas* gave a supermundane character to the Buddha himself but not to his teaching.

and they practically controlled the region from Darbhanga to Purnea—a region described as heretical by the orthodox Buddhists. This schism grew and the *Mahayana* totally eclipsed the *Sthaviravada* (which came to be called as *Hinayana*). It is from the *Mahayanas* that the *Tantra* has grown out and has permeated the life of the people so very completely that a *Tantrika* initiation is as essential for a true Maithila as the Vedic initiation. It was here in Tirhut that Buddhism was completely assimilated into Brahmanism—into *Tantra* and the *Vedanta* and Buddhist sites were converted into tantric *pithas*. Buddha was taken as an *Avatara*. That is the conclusion to which one is drawn irresistibly when one looks at the importance of *Tantra* in the ritual, cultural and religious life for more than a thousand years now. It is indeed a very interesting study to see how slowly but steadily the early anti-Vedic faiths may be taken farther and farther away from the original and orthodox form. Almost all the important tantric sites of North Bihar, specially Jaimanglagarh in Begusarai and Ugratara at Mahisi were formerly the seats of the Mahayana Buddhists and were later converted into *pithas*. For the last thousand years or so, Mahisi has continued to be the centre of tantric cult where people do *Sadhana* (or penance) during the Navaratra. The tantric studies are yet incomplete but the various *Kundas*, pointed out over there, are indicative of the fact that they were important during the period of the Pala rule whose sculptures are abundantly found there. In some of the broken pieces of blackstone sculptures, there are partially damaged inscriptions in the proto-Bengali (Gaudiya) character and some of the *kundas* are associated with the different names of the Buddhist deities. No systematic research has been done so far except what has been published by Prof. Radhakrishna Choudhary in recent years. The pottery finds and the various sites in the neighbourhood, though damaged by the Kosi are indicative of its antiquities and a scientific excavation may yield good results. Even today the people of Mahisi are tantric by faith.*

Let us now revert to our narrative of the political history of the district. The Huna invasion had given a death blow to the unity of India. Harsa succeeded only partially in repairing it. The glory of Magadha passes with the Guptas, Lichchhavis disappeared from history. Tibetan invasion of Tirhut caused havoc. The glory of Bihar, as a whole, was revived by a mighty king of the later Gupta dynasty, Adityasena, whose inscriptions in Maithili character, are yet extant. The glory of the later Guptas short lived and Yasovarman of Kanauj, the Chandellas, Pratiharas, Rastrakutas and Kalachuris came in quick succession. There was no political stability here or anywhere around. It can, however, be said with some amount of certainty that none of these invasions or conquests left any lasting impression on the life of the people. The people of the district

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* As discussed elsewhere the Ugratara at Mahisi is really a Khadir-varni Tara (P. C. R. C.).

remained engrossed in their literary pursuits and did not care for the change in political set-up which was so quick.

The establishment of the rule of the Palas of Bihar and Bengal in the eighth century A.D. gave some sort of political stability to the district. From the very beginning of their rule, the Palas held away over North and South Bihar. Both Dharmapala and Devapala were powerful rulers. We learn from the Bhagalpur copper plate of Narayan Pala that he made grants for the construction of a large number of Siva temples in the Kaksa Visaya of Tirabhukti. It should be noted here that Tirabhukti was an important province of the Palas and the villages and visaya mentioned in the above grant do not admit of any verification at present. The predominance of Siva worship in the eastern portion of Tirhut (comprising formerly some portions of modern Saharsa district) is an indication of the fact that Narayan Pala respected the genuine demand of his subjects by granting lands for the construction of Shiva temples some of which must have been under the confines of the present district of Saharsa.* One of the rare discoveries of the Pala period has come from village Bangaon (district Saharsa) and that is the *Bangaon Copper Plate of Vigrahapala.*** The plate was discovered by Pandit Ghuggar Jha in 1950 in course of ploughing his field. It is written on both sides of a single plate measuring 13.4″ in length and 12.2″ in breadth and .15″ in thickness. The Pala seal (*Dhamachukramuda*) is there. It weighs 425 tolas. It is dated in the 17th regnal year of Vigrahapala III of the Pala dynasty. It adds a new name to the list of Pala *Jayaskandhavaras* (temporary capitals) so far known. This charter was issued from *Jayaskandhavara* Kanchanpur which is yet unknown from another Pala grant. The donee of the present charter was Ghantukasarmana of Ittahaka or Jtuhoka and the land granted was in Vasukavarta in the Hodrey visaya of Tirabhukti. Vasukavarta is possibly the present village of Vasudeva and Ittahaka is possibly Etaha. Probably Kanchanpur stands represented by the ancient village Kandaha and its surroundings.† Tirabhukti is undoubtedly Tirhut while Hodrey is to be indentified with the modern village Hardi (in the district of Saharsa), associated with the famous Lorika ballad to which we shall revert later. Its *dutaka* is said to have been the mantrin Prahasitara, described as a son of the King. Possibly Prahasitara was born of a concubine as his name ends in *Raja* and not in Pala. In this connection it may be noted that Tibetan tradition records two main branches of the Palas.‡ We are not in a position to determine the difference here. In this grant king merely permitted and ratified the grant making the gift land a permanent revenue-free holding. The present charter throws a flood of light on the political history.

* R. K. Chaudhary—Inscriptions of Bihar: History of Bihar.

** R. K. Chaudhary—*Ibid*—The inscription has been edited by Dr. D. C. Sircar in the *Epigraphia Indica*.

† R. K. Chaudhary op. cit.

‡ JBORS — XXVII, p. 248.

The rule of Vigrahapala III in Tirabhukti has to be reconciled with the Kalachuri expansion. The Karanbela inscription assigns to Karna a victory over Gauda and the Bhernghat inscription speaks of his hostility with Vanga while his Paikore pillar inscription points to his advance as far east as Birbhum. The Tibetan life of Atisha Dipankarsrijnan of Vikramashila refers to an invasion of Magadha under Nayapala (father of Vigrahapala III) led by Karna. According to Sandhyakar Nandi's *Ramcharita,* Vigrahapala III defeated Karna and married his daughter Yauvanasri. Since South Bihar was hardly pressed by the Kalachuris, the Palas seem to have shifted to North Bihar with possibly Saharsa as their headquarters during the time of Vigrahapala III whose another inscription has been discovered from Naulagarh (edited by R. K. Choudhary) in Begusarai subdivision. During the time of Vigrahapala III, the Palas seem to have entrenched themselves in this remote part of Tirabhukti and also in the Jayanagar area of the district of Monghyr on the other side of the Ganga. Various villages in the district of Saharsa are associated with the names of the Pala rulers and it was through this district that the Palas could establish contact with Nepal. From the geographical point of view Saharsa was the most strategical place for being the *Jayaskandhavar* of the Palas at a time when they were surrounded on all sides by enemies. Saharsa lay on route to Bengal.

Both Anga and Tirhut formed a part of the Pala empire. If the *Anargha-Mahava* of Murari is to be relied upon, Champa was once the capital of Gauda. The Pala empire suffered a setback after Devapala as we find Rastrakuta Amonghavarsa and his son Krishna II receiving tribute from Anga. Narayanpala had to cast the humble pie at the hands of the Pratihara king, Mandrapala but ultimately he regained his lost prestige by recovering North Bengal, Bihar and sovereignty over Kanuaj. It seems that he also made North Bihar one of his capitals to face the repeated incursions of the Pratiharas. The successive waves of invaders continued to come till Vigrahapala III (referred to above) finally shifted his seat to North Bihar, somewhere near Saharsa, and secured peace through matrimonial alliances and gave a respite to the Pala power. Under the Palas, Saharsa was influenced by the culture that developed under them. Both Vedic and non-Vedic systems were in vogue and on the authority of the Bhagalpur copper plate of Narayanpala, it can be said that Saivism of the Pasupata sect was prevalent in this region. It is further believed that of the many educational *Maths* during the Pala rule, one or two were situated on the north of the Ganga somewhere between Purnea and Monghyr. The tantric cult also found favour with the people of this district.

Before closing this section, it would not be out of place to say a few words about the Lorik ballad for which Hardi (Hodrey Visaya of the copper plate) is famous. The Lorik ballad is now claimed by almost all the districts of Bihar, specially Gaya, Shahabad and Darbhanga but it should be noted here that *Lorik* is originally a

folk ballad of the district of Saharsa. The story of the Lorik is as follows—Lorik was a native of Gaud and a favourite of goddess Durga. One morning his wife, Manjar, accidentally saw him dallying with Chanain (the daughter of Sahdip Mahar, the Raja of his native village, a bearer by caste). Versed in astrology as she was, she (Manjar) found out that Lorik was to run away with Chanain on that very night and she, therefore, informed her mother-in-law about the impending misfortune that was to overtake the family. The mother-in-law took all precaution to save Lorik from going out. Chanain reached the spot where the meeting was arranged and not finding Lorik marked the place with fine red spots and called on Durga for aid. Goddess Durga came to her rescue and prolonged the night seven times and opened a passage through Lorik's hut. At long last the lovers met and started for Hardi. They were ultimately united into marriage and the ceremony was performed by Durga herself. One night while sleeping under a tree Chanain was stung by a serpent and died. Lorik erected a funeral pyre and sat on it with Chanain in his arms. Fire lit to the pyre stands extinguished by some unknown power and the lover continued to sit on the pyre. though persuaded to desist from such action. A goddess in the shape of an old woman, finding him obstinate in his resolve, offered to revive the dead and thereby this love story assumed an eternal character Chanain gains life but is again won by a king in a game of dice. Chanain threw challenge to the king and ultimately defeated him and recovered everything which her husband had lost. All this took place while they were on their destination to Hardi. After being united again they reached Hardi and were presented to the king. There Lorik did not bow before the king who got angry at his behaviour. The king would not allow him a place in his capital unless he accepted the occupation of a cowherd. Lorik agreed though indignantly that he would turn a cowherd only if king's daughter could come out herself to milch the cows. Ultimately a battle ensued and it continued for seven days in which the Raja suffered a lot as Chanain had the blessings of Durga in return for the sacrifice of her first born son to the goddess. The Raja agreed to give half of his dominion to Lorik if he could bring him the head of his antagonist, Raja of Harwa associated with the Bahera region of the district of Darbhanga. Lorik undertook to do the job and on accomplishing the task he was proclaimed the joint king of Hardi, a position which he held for twelve years. One night Lorik happened to hear a woman weep near his palace and asked Chanain to enquire into the cause. As she went out, she was followed unseen by her lover. The old woman, on enquiry, revealed that she was anxious for the return of her son who was out for more than three days. Chanain advised her to complain falsely of some ill treatment and not about the return of her son. Lorik who had overheard everything, accused Chanain of falsehood and said that if three days' absence of a son could make a mother weep so much, his only wife and mother might have shed many tears

during the past twelve years. The effect on his mind was so great that he instantly left for home accompanied by Chanain and fixed her residence in his neighbourhood.

The story, having many morals, is yet preserved in a very long ballad full of melody and pathos. It takes full thirty six hours to complete the narrative if it is sung with all ceremony This is one of the finest preserves of the Maithili literature maintained orally for the last thousand years or more.* The text has since changed beyond recognition though the theme of the story continues to a great extent. The few stanzas, collected by Grierson and others, are not always found in the text now available. No systematic attempt has hitherto been made to collect this piece of literature. In this connection, it may be pointed out that in the early part of the 13th-14th century A.D., the ballad was sung with great intensity and was presented in the form of *Solo* as would be evident from Jyotiriswara's *Varnaratnakara* where there is a mention of *Lorikanach*. The very use of the term 'Lorik' by Jyotiriswar is an indication of its antiquity. Lorik theme immensely influenced the Sufi mystics of the age and we have at our disposal a very important manuscript *'Chandaban'* by Daud dealing with story of Lorik and Chenain. This manuscript has been discovered by Professor Syed Hasan Askari of the Patna University in 1954 and its main contents were published by him in the *Current Studies* (a research magazine of the Patna College). Daud was a contemporary of the Tugluq rulers and it thus appears that the Lorik ballad had influenced a greater section of Indian population by that time. Hardi is the main centre of Lorik and people of Saharsa look upon Hardi with as great reverence as research they do at any other shrine. Needless to say that it is a rare gem of Maithili literature though no serious research has hitherto been made in this branch. Saharsa may well feel proud of this remarkable cultural heritage. The Lorik ballad is associated with the Yadavas.

History of Saharsa (between 1097 and 1765 A.D.).

The decline of the Pala authorities in Bihar and Bengal was followed by the establishment of the Karnata dynasty in Mithila and Sena dynasty in Bengal. These two dynasties played a very predominent part in the history of Eastern India. R. D Banerjee† had rightly pointed out that when the whole area from Purusapura to Kamrup was groaning under the deadweight of the invading Muslim armies, the independent Hindu kingdom of Mithila was just like an oasis in the desert. Both the Karnatas and the Senas claimed suzerainty over the portions of the present district of Saharsa as the following details would show. Some important battles between the two kingdoms were fought in this district. Saharsa was the scene of

* A version has been collected and is in possession of Prof. R. K. Chaudhary.

† R. D. Banerjee — "*Banglar Itihas*" (2 Vols.).

important political activity during the few centuries of Hindu rule under the Karnatas and the Senas as well. The year 1097 forms a landmark in the history of North Bihar as in that year Nanyadeva founded the famous Karnat kingdom with his headquarters at Simaraongarh (in the district of Champaran).

Birbandh, according to Buchanan Hamilton, is the most important remains on the north of the Ganga. It is a long embankment following the course of the river Daus in *parganas* Dhaphar and Harawat. It seems to have formerly run down to the point where Daus fell into the Tiljuga. Some authorities took it to be a line of fortification. This Birbandh, incomplete as it seems to be, is attributed to one Bir. Who that man was we do not know. As the lines are said to extend to the hills, it is probable to suggest that Mithila included the country of Morang. This remarkable line of antiquity in the district of Saharsa is running through the north-west corner for about twenty miles or so. It is called '*Mazurinikata*' (dug by hired men). The Birbandh is considered to be the dividing line between Bengal and Tirhut in the middle ages. The account is so confusing and uncertain that it is very difficult to say anything definitely on this score. It is a fact that a greater portion of the present Morang district was included in the present districts of Saharsa and Darbhanga. The name *Bir* might have been an appellation of a hero whose real name has been forgotten. Birbandh and Birpur (of the Kosi Project importance) certainly indicate the possibility of some hero known as '*Bir*' who has left an indelible mark on the district, though now only indirectly known.

Nanyadeva, the founder of the Karnata dynasty, extended his sway from Champaran to Purnea and after stabilising his position in North Bihar he turned his attention towards Gauda. The Senas also coveted the same portion of North Bengal. It appears that in the beginning the two ambitious chiefs (Nanyadeva and Vijayasena) combined in their efforts but fell out over the spoils. We learn from the Deopana inscription of Vijayasena that Nanyadeva was defeated and imprisoned (*Epigraphia Indica*--Vol. I, pp. 305–315). According to Mithila tradition Nanyadeva was kept in confinement in Supaul subdivision.* It was Gangadeva (his son) who freed his father. Mithila tradition further asserts that Vallalasena, at the instance of his father invaded Mithila and imprisoned Nanyadeva and in recognition of his services, Vallala was adorned with the title of *Nisanka-Shankara*. Nishankpur *pargana* of the district of Saharsa is said to have been established by Vallalasena, though the credit is somehow taken by one of the Gandhavariya Rajput ruler, Nishankasimha of a later date. The Sanokhar inscription of Vallalasena proves that his rule extended up to the district of Bhagalpur and hence the claim of his invasion of the northern side of the river

* For details — R. K. Chaudhary — The *Karnatas of Mithila* — *ABORI* XXXV, p. 91 ff.

Ganga cannot be rejected outright. It is believed that Nishankapur Kurha was the centre of Sena administration in this district. The Birbandh was possibly the dividing line between the two kingdoms. The Sena inscriptions (*Cf. Inscriptions of Bengal*, Vol. III) speak of various donations in the region of Morang and Varahaksetra and this also proves that the Sena and the Karnat kingdom met somewhere in the district of Saharsa.

Nanyadeva had two sons—Malladeva and Gangadeva. It appears that after the death of Nanya, the Karnat kingdom came to be divided amongst his two sons—Gangadeva ruled over Mithila and Malladeva ruled over Nepal and the eastern portion of Tirhut. Before this division took place, the two princes seem to have succeeded in forcing the Senas further east and that is evident from the establishment of two important settlements in the district of Saharsa, viz., Gangapur Rajani (named after Gangadeva) in *pargana* Nishankpur Kurha and Maldiha (named after Malladeva) on the Saharsa—Purnea border. The village 'Malhad' near Supaul is also associated with Malladeva. Bheet Bhagwanpur (in Darbhanga district) was the seat of Malladeva as is evident from his inscription. In the regular line of succession, Gangadeva is mentioned while Malladeva is left out. Gangadeva introduced sound administrative system and laid the foundation of the institution of Patwaris and the village police system. He was succeeded by Narasimhadeva during whose reign Mithila and Nepal were separated. During his time, the kingdom of Tirhut lay between Kosi and Gandak and the Burhi Kosi formed the boundary line between Mithila and Bengal. Though a major part of Purnea district formed a part of Bakhtiyar's kingdom, Saharsa seems to have maintained its independence till then. He also introduced some administrative reforms. He was succeeded by Ramsimhadeva about whom we have an eye-witness account in the form of biography of Dharmaswami. Muslim invaders had begun to frequent the district. He was followed by Sakrasimha and the latter by Harisimha who lost to Ghiyas-ud-din Tughluq in a protracted struggle. Though politically his reign was, in modern sense, a failure, culturally it was one of immense importance. He is credited with having instituted the system of *Panjis* in which the people of the district of Saharsa equally participated and whose undying influence is yet perceptible. In the vicinity of Panchkosi in and around the village of Mahisi are the famous villages of Sahihoul Ekamma, Bijalpur, Rajoura, Rampur, etc., which formed *mulgrana* of the various *mulas* introduced by Harisimhadeva. Jagatapura is also associated with this reform movement and till recently there were important *Sabhagachis* at Jagatpur and Bangaon. Harasimhadeva was the last king of the Karnata dynasty and with him disappeared the last semblance of Hindu independence. Tirhut, as a whole, formed a part of Tughluq empire and in Mithila the Karnatas were supplanted by the Oinwaras.

According to some contemporary sources, Harisimha was able to repulse the attack of Ghiyas-ud-din Tughluq (1324 A.D.) and continued to resist him at least for sometime. The Raja, however, transferred his capital to Bhatgaon and Tirhut was lost to the Karnatakas. Muhammad Tughluq issued coins from the mint of Tirhut. [1] Regarding a contemporary account of the expedition of Ghiyas-ud-din against Tirhut, Isami writes, "Next day the Sultan started from the bank of the Kosi towards Tirhut. He secured the kings at one and the sametime, one by war, the other by peace. As soon as the king of Tirhut heard of the approach of the Sultan he took refuge in a forest. The imperial army reached the outskirts of the forest. The Sultan was very much surprised at the sight of the forest. It is said that he himself got down from his horse, and taking an axe in his hand cut down an old tree in order to clear the jungle. The soldiers, thereupon, cleared a passage for the army with the help of axes. In two or three days the passage was ready, and on the third day the imperial army reached the fort of Tirhut. It had seven deep ditches full of water. For two or three weeks the Sultan sent his soldiers to the right and left with orders to attack the Hindus wherever gathered, and plunder them. After this he sent (Nasir-ud-din) with royal umbrella to Dakhnawati. The Sultan left the valiant Ahmad, Son of Talbaga, in Tirhut and, having started from the camp on the next day, reached the capital in one or two months." [2]

It appears that Tirhut regained independence during the reign of Muhammad-bin-Tughluq and a new family of Brahmanical kings ruled over Tirhut in an unbroken line of succession from about A. D. 1353 to A. D. 1526. [3]

The Oinwaras, [4] for all practical purposes, were independent as would be evident from their inscriptions and coins discovered from the districts of Darbhanga and Saharsa. At this time the whole region of Tirhut was sandwiched between the Muslim rulers of Oudh and Bengal and their routes lay through Tirhut. The Tughluq authority in Mithila stood weakened. Haji Illyas of Bengal, taking advantage of this situation, invaded Tirhut and defeated its ruler. He divided Tirhut kingdom into two parts—(*i*) territories north of the Gandak remained under he Oinwaras and (*ii*) territories south of the Gandak and north of the Ganga came under the sway of Jai Illyas. As a result of this division, the district of Saharsa continued to be under the control of the Oinwara rulers. The most famous

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(1) History and Culture of the Indian People, Vol. V: *The struggle for Empire* p. 48.

(2) History and Culture of the Indian People, Vol. VI, The Delhi Sultanate, pp. 399-400.

(3) For other views — see R. K. Chaudhary; *Harisimha of Mithila — a reassessment of facts in the ABORI* — of 1962.

(4) R. K. Choudhary — *The Oinwaras of Mithila* in JBRS—XL-p2 (1954).

king of this line was Shivasimha, who issued gold coins. He was a friend of Raja Ganesh of Bengal. Vidyapati, one of the greatest poets of India, was at his court. It may be mentioned here that Vidyapati was also connected with the district of Saharsa as his daughter was married to a renowned Brahman family of Mahisi and whose descendents are yet living. After Shivasimha, another king of importance is Narasimhadeva whose dated inscription on the sun temple of Kandaha (Saharsa) is yet extant. Narasimha had to face a lot of trouble with the rulers of Bengal and it is believed that he had his temporary capital at Kandaha with a view to check the advance of the Bengal army. Saharsa was practically free from the Muslim invasion though the route lay through the district (*see* below).

Francis Buchanan in his account of Purnea has recorded a tradition which, though not yet verified, has some bearing on the history of Saharsa. On the west side of the Kosi are several monuments of a chief named Karnadeva, and of his three brothers, Ballabh, Durlabh and Tribhuvan who are said to have been powerful chiefs of the tribe of Doniwar Brahmans. Buchanan admits that his account is based on a manuscript list of the king of Morang (pp. 53-54). So far as this account of Doniwar Brahmans is concerned, the fact stands confirmed by Vidyapati who went to the Saptari (Morang area) with Lakhimarani after the disappearance of Shivasimha. The Doniwars have been important ruling families and one such family is yet extant in the Samastipur subdivision of the district of Darbhanga. Buchanan also makes a reference to the Domkatar tribe. On the eastern side of the *Majurnikata* about one and a half miles from the border of Nepal, there are remains of some ancient ruins which are attributed to the family of Karnadeva. There is a large heap of bricks and earth from east to west and a chamber was laid open by excavation. Five miles south-west of the same are remains of the same family called Karyain and Dharhara is also attributed to the same family. It appears that Karnadeva, whose origin and history are yet unknown, was one of the founders of many important places of the district of Saharsa. (for details of Martin-*Eastern India*--III--pp. 47, 56).

The downfall of the Karnatas and the disappearance of the Oinwaras paved the way for the expansion of Muslim power in the district. In the north-west, the frontier of Bengal extended but little beyond the Kosi river. Sikandar Shah's coins have been discovered far west of Kosi and Shahugar (in Madhepura) is associated with this ruler. Portions of Morang, Saharsa and Purnea were some of the territories that fell a prey to the depredations of the Muslim invaders in the middle ages. It may be mentioned that Sikandar Lodi consolidated his hold on Bihar and obliged the Chiefs of Saran and Tirhut to acknowledge his suzerainty.* The Hindu Rajas of the Kosi

* K. S. Lal : *Twilight of the Sultanate*, p. 172.

tract followed the policy of '*Vetasivritti*' with regard to the Muslim rulers of Lakhanauti.* Tirhut had to face regular invasions both from the east and the west. The Tughluq conquest of Tirhut finally ended the semblance of an independent kingdom in 1324 A.D. Ghiyas-ud-din Tughluq on his return from Bengal seems to have passed through the district of Saharsa and is said to have invaded Harisimhapur. On his way to Tirhut, he is said to have secured submission of smaller kings. Tirhut was made a province of the Tughluq empire and a wing was established at Tirhut. The meteoric rise of Haji Illyas of Bengal and his consequent conquest of Tirhut forced Firoz Shah Tughluq to proceed to Bengal. Firoz followed the old route *via* Tirhut. When he arrived on the banks of the river Kosi, he found the army of Illyas on the other side. The Sultan marched hundred *kos* up the Kosi and crossed it at the place where the river issues from the mountains. Waters ran with such force that stones of five hundred maunds weight were borne along like straws. The above description by Afif is an indication of the extent of force with which Kosi then flew. Firoz seems to have crossed the river at a place near the Nepal border called Jiaran where Kosi is easily fordable. In this he seems to have been assisted by the local Rajas. It may be noted with satisfaction, here that Firoz on his return from Bengal during the rains, appointed officers to examine the banks of all the water courses and report how inundations extended. The place where Firoz is said to have crossed the Kosi on his onward march to Bengal is identified with modern Rajbiraj (Nepal) near the Saharsa district. After settling matters with the Sultan of Bengal Firoz handed over powers to the Oinwara ruler of Tirhut and appointed Qazis for the area. Khawaja Jahan is said to have built a number of fortresses in different parts of Tirhut. Hussain Shah of Bengal is said to have held sway over Saharsa.

Before proceeding further, it would not be out of place here to say a word about Kosi. Kosi has been the determining factor in the pre-transport era. The river proceeded from Chatra eastward and joined the Ganga far below. The *Cossoanus* of Arrian, a tributary of the Ganga, has been rightly identified with the Kosi. It has its reference in the Epics, the *Puranas* and even in Kalidas. It formed the boundary of the Bihar portion of Purnea. Ali Mardan crossed it in 1209 and Firoz Shah Tughluq in 1354 A.D. In Akbar's reign it flowed into Rajmahal. In Akbar's time the list of Mahals to the east of this river is in Sarkar Monghyr. In Rennell's map, the river enters Purnea over Nathpur and flowing between Birnagar and Purnea fell into the Ganga twelve miles west of Karhagola. The river has since changed its course further west.

After the fall of the Oinwaras, there was a chaos. The Bhara clan of Rajputs is said to have acquired power and ruled for sometime. They had their headquarters at Bhaur. In the district of

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* J. N. Sarkar (edited) *History of Bengal*, Vol. II, p. 29.

Saharsa, the Gandhavariya Rajputs are said to have acquired powers and ruled during this period of confusion. The Gandhariyas trace their descent from the ruling chiefs of Tirhut. The whole district of Saharsa was dotted with small baronies created both by the Hindus and the Muslims. Even in the early part of Mughal rule, they could venture to oppose the central authority as the Bihar Afgans were opposed to the establishment of Mughal authority. The Karranis and the Afgans in collusion with the local Rajput rulers and petty chiefs, had made this district the centre of revolt. After the formal revenue assessment, Tirhut, with Darbhanga as the head-quarters, was made a Sarkar. Sarkar Tirhut was one of the largest Sarkars of the Mughal empire and it had seventy-four Mahals under it. In North Bihar the following were the Sarkars:—

(*i*) Sarkar Champaran.

(*ii*) Sarkar Hajipur.

(*iii*) Sarkar Tirhut.

(*iv*) Sarkar Purnea (extending up to Mahananda)

It was in the year 1582 that Raja Todarmal made the revenue settlement in Subah Bihar. His assessment was generally based on the principles and methods adopted by Sher Shah. The Subah was divided into Sarkars and Sarkars into Mahals. The following *parganas* and Mahals of the district of Saharsa are known to us from the Mughal revenue records.

We have the name of the following *parganas* and mahals of the district with Mughal period:—

	Revenue in dams.
(*i*) Maihni Gopal (Sarkar Tirhut) ..	9,728
(*ii*) Kabakhand (Ditto) . ..	2,43,677
(*iii*) Uttarkhand (Ditto)	1,28,412
(*iv*) Chai (Sarkar Monghyr)	92,80,000
(*v*) Dharampur (Ditto)	40,00,000
(*vi*) Nishankpur Kurha	9,728
(*vii*) Dhaphar	Possibly they were not assessed for reasons unknown.
(*viii*) Nathpur (now in Purnea)	..
(*ix*) Naredigar	
(*x*) Barel (Sarkar Tirhut)	7,89,858
(*xi*) Pipra (Ditto)	1,12,591
(*xii*) Parri (Ditto)	5,54,258
(*xiii*) Khanaulli (Kanauli Bazar) (Tirhut) ..	4,08,804
(*xiv*) Ladwari (Tirhut)	..

The very fact, that most of the existing *parganas* of the district of Saharsa were assessed during the time of Akbar, is indicative of the fact that the district had acquired sufficient importance. Some of the inaccessible *parganas* were possibly out of cultivation and were left. Stray historical references here and there are also available. In the Kishanganj police-station of the district of Saharsa, there is a mosque in village Sarandi. This is said to be the fort of Raja Bairisal (possibly of the Gandhavariya Rajput). The site is associated with the reign of Akbar in local tradition and folklore. During the period of the imperial Mughals, the district seems to have been attached to both the Sarkars of Monghyr and Tirhut though a considerable portion of it was under Sarkar Tirhut.* The unsubjugated northern hill tribes and Pathan chiefs continued to trouble the Mughals and according to *Ain-i-Akbari* about a lac of soldiers were stationed within the vicinity of Darbhanga. The refractory *zamindars* of Morang and petty chiefs between the basins of Bagmati and Kosi were also causing concern. *Fauzdars* were stationed at Sarkar Tirhut and Sarkar Monghyr.

The assessment made by Todar Mal between 1577 and 1582 was further revised in 1658 by Prince Shah Shuja, in 1685 under the reign of Aurangzeb, in 1722 by Murshid Quli Khan and in 1750 under the orders of Allivardi Khan. Subsequent changes were made in 1760-61 by Mir Kasim and then in 1765. Shuja's assessment resulted in the increase of the revenue by 25 per cent, to be further increased by Murshid Quli Khan who replaced Sarkar by Ghakla. It was about this time that Dhapkar, Nathpur, Dharampur and Garari were added to Purnea by conquest. After the conquest of *parganas* west of Kosi in 1731 by Saif Khan, two types of Tauzi serials came into being: (*i*) *Fasli* serial for *parganas* Dharampur, Harawat, Dhapkar and Chai and (*ii*) a Bengali serial for Bengali Mahals.

It is said that *pargana* Dharampur was granted to Mahesh Thakur along with the whole of Sarkar Tirhut. It may be noted here that the original *farman* granted to Mahesh Thakur is not available now. In an extant *farman* of 1575-76 A.D., it is said that the Kanungoship and Choudhuryship of the entire Sarkar of Tirhut is entrusted to Gopal Thakur in recognition of his loyalty to Akbar. Gopal Thakur is considered to be absolute in his authority. Another grant was issued by Aurangzeb in 1667 to Mahinath Thakur for his help against the rebellious chiefs of Morang It was through this grant that Mahinath Thakur was granted *Muqaddami* of *pargana* Dharampur. Shah Alam II confirmed on Madhava Sinha the hereditary grant of Sarkar Tirhut and *pargana* Dharampur of Sarkar Monghyr. The Maharajas of Darbhanga held sway over a considerable portion of the district of Saharsa and that is evident from the following facts. The Maharajas of Darbhanga made rent-free grants to certain individuals which were

* R. K. Chaudhary—*History of Muslim Rule in Tirhut.*

later confirmed by the reigning emperors. Alamgir II confirmed the rent-free hereditary grant of the villages of Bewan and Vishunpatti in *pargana* Mallhnigopal (district Saharsa) made by Raja Narendra Sinha (1743—60)* to the mother of Babu Pratap Singh for maintenance. It may be mentioned here that Narendra Sinha married a girl of Mahisi (Saharsa) and was responsible for the construction of the existing Ugratara temple there. It was possibly from the time of Mahinath Thakur (1667—1687) that all the *parganas* of the present district of Saharsa came under the control of Darbhanga Raj. A document of the time of Aurangzeb (referred to above) gives a list of 107 *parganas* granted to him.

(i) Province of Bihar—Sarkar Tirhut including sub-Himalayan tract of the north.

(ii) *Zamindari, milkiat* and settlement of 102 *parganas*.

(iii) Settlement of *pargana* Dharampur (Sarkar Monghyr—1 *pargana*).

(iv) Sarkar Purnea—5 *parganas*.

(v) Sarkar Tajpur—2 *parganas*.

The Muzaffarpur Collectorate Records (Edited by P. C. Roy Choudhury) are full of references about the dispute between the East India Company and Raja Mādhava Singh of the Darbhanga Raj. There are also frequent references to border conflicts with Nepal.

The Mughal Governor was asked to honour Mahinath Thakur.† During the whole course of Mughal rule, the present district of Saharsa seems to have formed parts of Sarkar Tirhut, Sarkar Monghyr and Sarkar Purnea. The Muslim rule had its effects on the life and culture of people of this district and some of the Rajput *zamindars* became converts. The Muslims of Nawhatta circle in the district of Saharsa are said to have been originally Rajputs and their conversion is traced to the days of Mughal emperors. The Rajputs of this district are historically important but no connected history of their dynasties is yet available. It is said that in 1654 Sahjahan bestowed the title of Raja on Kesri Sinha (ancestor of Sonbarsa Raj). Raja Amar Sinha of the same dynasty is said to have built a fort at Sihaul. Raja Fateh Singh of the same line is said to have sided with the English East India Company against Mir Kasim in the battle of Udhuanala. The dynasty claims to be the founder of the Gandhvariya Rajput in Tirhut. The only family of the Chandela Rajput is found at Shah Alamnagar in *pargana* Chai. The family claims to have owned fifty-two villages. They might have possibly come to this side in the wake of the Chandela invasion of Tirhut in 8th—10th and 11th centuries A.D. No record of this dynasty is yet available.

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* Jatashankar Jha — *Indian Archives* —Vol. XII. 45 H.

† Ahmad — *Origin and Growth of Darbhanga Raj.*

History of Saharsa since 1765 A.D.

The battles of Plassey (1757) and Buxar (1764) and the grant of Dewani (1765) changed the face of Bihar and Bengal and the establishment of British rule was made a reality. Prior to the advent of the British rule, the *zamindar* was held responsible for the prevention of theft and robbery and it was his duty to assist the *fauzdar* with all his resources. The main *fauzdari* districts in Bihar prior to the British administration consisted of Shahabad, Rohtas, Monghyr, Bihar, Champaran, Saran, Tirhut and Hajipur. When the Britishers took over, they decided in 1769 to appoint English supervisors for each district. The supervisor was required to submit (*a*) a summary history of the district, (*b*) draw exhaustive report of the state, produce and capacity of the lands, (*c*) ascertain amount of the revenues, cess and demands made on the *ryots*, (*d*) regulate commerce and (*e*) enforce justice. A supervisor for Purnea was appointed in 1769 and in 1770 for the districts of Chapra, Arrah, Darbhanga, Sasaram and Monghyr. The conditions in the old Sarkars of Monghyr were worsening daily. Ducarel wrote "Hardly a day passes that I do not hear of some bare faced robbery in the houses of the most answerable tenants." (*Proceedings of the Controlling Council of Revenue*—Murshidabad--April 4th, 1771; Vol. V, p. 21). The Company's servants revealed that the *zamindars* far from policing the country were often found in alliance with the gangs of robbers. Some of the itinerant robbers were known to be acting under the authority of Raja Pratap Sinha of Tirhut (*Proceedings of the Controlling Council of Revenue*, Patna, July 27, 1771). When Hastings joined as the Governor of Bengal, he appointed Sadrul Haq to the office of the Daroga of the Sadr Nizamat Adalat and asked him to examine a petition against the miscarriage of justice. The situation had deteriorated to such an extent that the *fauzdars* themselves were in the greatest need of protection. In September, 1777. Reza Khan was constrained to report another incident. Mir Sakarullah, the *fauzdar* of Tirhut, had settled the purchase of a log of wood with Roy Mohanlal, an *amil* of the Nizamat. On hearing that a servant of Mir Imam Bux, the company's agent for saltpetre, accompanied by a peon was chopping the wood, Mir Sakarullah informed them of his transaction with Mohanlal. Being enraged, Imam Bux robbed the treasury and assaulted the *fauzdar*. Reza Khan reported the whole affair to Warran Hastings. (*Calendar of Persian Correspondence*, nos. 655, 692). Hastings arranged for 18 Fauzdari Adalats and some changes were accordingly made. In places notorious for robberies and murder additional sepoys were stationed by the company and in *thana* Purnea 50 more sepoys were posted. Fauzdari Adalats were stationed at Bhagalpur, Purnea and Azimabad in Bihar, Sadar Nizamat Adalat at Tajpur, Darbhanga and Mahisi (Champaran). The delay in dispensing justice was causing concern to the administrators who issued a questionnaire to various Magistracies in Bengal and Bihar and Magistrates of Purnea, Tirhut, and Bhagalpur.

responded. It may be noted here with satisfaction that several Magistrates of Bihar wanted to extend the police responsibilities to non-officials. The Tirhut Magistrate wanted a notice to be issued, purporting that neighbours must help the householder to apprehend robbers.

The grant of Dewani may be said to be the starting point of the British revenue administration. For more than a quarter of century (1765—1793) the revenue administration was in a nebulous stage. The year 1770 was the last year of Indian management. In 1772 European Revenue Collectors were appointed. Between 1778—80 annual settlements were made. The Permanent Settlement came in 1793. From 1765—72, the name of *pargana* Chai does not find mention in the rent roll of Subah Bihar, since it had been transferred to the province of Bengal under the false claim that it constituted a *jagir* in favour of Nizam-ud-daullah, son of Mir Jafar. At the time of Permanent Settlement, Chai *pargana* seems to have been a part of Bhagalpur. *Zamindari* was the prevailing form of tenure before its abolition in the last decade. The Bhagalpur Collectorate record contained an account of the *zamindars* of Bhagalpur in 1793 in the form of a letter addressed by Collector Adair to the higher authorities (*see* K. K. Basu's article in *Bengal Past and Present* of 1932). Mr. Pemberton carried survey operations of a major portion of the modern district of Saharsa, for the *parganas* of Naredigar, Malhnigopal, Nishankpur Kurha and Chai. He observed (1793) "the assessment was nominal and even the cultivated parts were settled very favourably for the owners of the soil and on mere estimated areas". In May, 1788, it was pointed out to Sir John Shore that a sum of Rs. 9,836-14-4 was due from the *zamindar* of Tirhut on account of Kabkhand and Naredigar and farmed by Mr. Smith and to be paid by that gentleman to that *zamindar*. (P. C. Roy Choudhury—*Muzaffarpur Collectorate Records*, p.23). In November 1787, Cornwallis was requested to direct the officer commanding the Battalion at Baragaon to provide a guard to protect the public treasury and to secure the *zamindar* of Tirhut from those losses to which he is annually exposed from the encroachments of the Nepal Amla. (*Ibid*, p. 24-25.)

Pargana Chai.

We have given above, on the basis of the Ain-i-Akbari, the list of some fiscal divisions of this district. Another important fiscal division of this district is *pargana* Chai bounded on the north by *pargana* Nishankpur, on the east by *pargana* Dharampur, on the west by *pargana* Pharkiya and on the south by *pargana* Jahangira. According to Adair's list of *zamindaris* (1787) this area in the sixteenth century A.D. was one great waste of marsh and jungle. A family from Chotanagpur came and settled in this region. A man, Harish by name, collected a body of settlers of various castes. Soon after a Rajput, Udai Simha by name, usurped the area. His descendants later secured a grant from Shah Shuja. In 1703, the

zamindari descended to Deo Simha whose three sons divided the state and the last son, Hashaul Simha, got Mouza Alamzagar whose descendants are still said to be ruling. A letter, dated the 19th May, 1798 from Bhagalpur to the Collector of Tirhut mentions that 5,000 bighas of land of Raja Kishun Singh of Chai *pargana* might be purchased for the use of *jagirdars'* institution (*ibid*, p. 148). It appears from a letter of 1804 that *parganas* Chai and Pharkiya had been earlier separated from Tirhut and included in Bhagalpur (*ibid*, p. 214). Some portions of *parganas* Chai and Dharampur were granted to R. Gilchrist for farming (*ibid*, p-242).

Rajput family at Durgapur (Nishankpur Kurha).

Another Rajput ruling family is said to have settled at Durgapur in *pargana* Nishankpur Kurha. The family is said to have descended from one Haslam Singh, a Pamar Rajput, who with his brother Madhu, came from Daranagar in west Tirhut. They first found employment with the Darbhanga Raj but later on acquired independence and conquered a portion of Nishankpur and Uttarakhand. Madhu proceeded to Delhi to obtain a grant. He became a Muslim there. He was murdered on his return. His head was cut off at Ladarighat, 18 miles south of Madhepura and his horse carrying off his headless body galloped off to Nauhatta, south-west of Supaul. A tomb has been erected at Ladarighat and is kept up by a *fakir* who has got a *jagir* of 40 bighas. His descendants are Mussalmans and live at Nauhatta.

Panchmahala Rajputs.

The Panchmahala consisting of Barail (also mentioned in Ain-i-Akbari), Baruari, Shukhpur, Parsarna and Yadia Manganj has a good population of Gandhavariya Rajputs. These Rajputs trace their descent from the Karnat rulers of Mithila. They originally belonged to Gandharvapur in Sakri in Darbhanga and migrated to this part in the middle ages. The connected history of these families are not available. The Rajput rulers of Barwari are said to have been the descendants of one Nishanka Sinha who is said to have carved out an estate for him in *pargana* Malhnigopal. His descendants are spread over the whole of Panchmahala. He had four sons of which Gopal Sinha was the last and after whom *pargana* Malhnigopal is named. This *pargana* is also mentioned in Ain-i-Akbari The second son, Dariya Sinha, was a very powerful ruler. He had three sons of which Jainarayan was the eldest in line of succession at Baruari and he was succeeded by his son Raja Kokil Sinha. He is said to have received a grant from emperor Shah Allam, in the eleventh year of his reign (English version of this grant is published in *Bhagalpur Darpan*, pp. 316—318). A letter of 1800 mentions Raja Jagdatta Singh of Nishankpur (*Muzaffarpur Records, p.* 190).

Buchanan's Account of the District of Saharsa (1809—11).

On the 9th February, 1811, Buchanan entered Bihpur where he found the agents of the *zamindars*. From there he went to Phulout,

He mentions Tiljuga and Ghagri rivers which abounded in fish. The country near Ghaghri was bare and dismal. There were a few scattered fields of coarse grass. On the 10th February he reached Alamnagar where the Raja of Chai *pargana* resided. The Raja and the two younger brothers were keen sportsmen. From there he went to Mahinathnagar, a low country filled with swamps. People lived more by their cattle. Mahinathnagar was in Pharkhiya and not in Chai as represented by Rennel. The Raja said that his boundary with Tirhut was seven or eight *coses* north from Alamnagar and that towards the north and east his district was well cultivated. About a mile from Alamnagar was the market place named Ladangwa (Ladma) held under a tree near a village. Buchanan was directed to proceed to Simri as other routes were not good. He came to an old water course called Tilawe (river) which was said to be navigable in the rainy season It formed the boundary with Tirhut. He followed its course for about 1½ miles to Sugowa (Sugma, village Sogriah or Rennel) and from there he went to Chautham (JBORS-XV. 452 ff.).

Early European Planters.

It is interesting to observe that quite a number of European planters had settled down in this district from the beginning of the 19th century. From a letter of 25th March, 1816 it appears that the following persons were associated with the district of Saharsa:— (1) I H. Gentil (Bangaon), (2) A. Glegg (Pipra), (3) M. Moran (Bara), (4) H. Hill (Raspur) (*Muzaffarpur Records*, p. 295). On March, 1816 a letter to the Collector of Tirhut mentions the ensuing march for Kishunganj and that was to commence through the district of Tirhut. The Collector was informed to send a Native Officer to meet the Commander at Patna for accompanying the detachment through Tirhut. The route indicated was through Bathnaha, Pipra Kothi, Bour, Parsarma, Singheshwarasthan, Halleynagar and Murliganj (*ibid*, pp. 296-97). Some of the European descendants are still in Supaul and Madhepura subdivisions as gentlemen farmers. Some of the Christian Missions have also been working in the interior since decades.

Earlier consultation about the Kosi Barrage.

The year 1897 has a very great indirect importance for the district of Saharsa. It was in this year that there was a serious attempt to tackle the Kosi problem by barraging the river at Chatra. The old records in the National Archives of India, Delhi, bear this out.*

The records in the National Archives show that there was a conference at the Secretariat of the Government of India in Calcutta on the 24th February 1897 to consider whether it was desirable to take any measures to train the channel of the river Kosi, having regard more particularly to the change which had taken place in the

* Foreign Department Extl. A, May, 1897, no. 116—122, K. W.

course of the river in the two last flood seasons. The conference was attended by Col. Bisset, Secretary to the Government of India, Public Works Department, Col. Gracey, R. E., Director-General of Railways, J. G. H. Glass, C.I.E., Secretary to the Government of Bengal, Public Works Department, Col. McArthur, R. E., Secretary to the Government of Bengal, Public Works Department, A. Izat, Agent and Chief Engineer, B. N. W. Railway, J. A. Anderson, Engineer-in-Chief, E. B. S. Railway and W. A. Inglis, Superintending Engineer, Bengal. Mr. Anderson's proposal was to close the current channel of the river at Chatra by means of a series of crib groins and to reopen the western channel known generally as the channel of 1889. Some of the members present displayed insufficient knowledge of the channel of 1898 to form an opinion as to whether the river if led into it at Chatra would continue to flow in it, or would leave it for some other channel lower down. Col. Gracey, however, felt some doubt if any training work could be permanently maintained in an efficient state in a river like the Kosi, which was reported to carry down enormous quantities of fine silt and had the tremendous slope of about 3 feet to the mile at Anchra and very much more above that place. Mr. Izat feared that the interference with the natural adjustment of the river bed might throw the river westward, and thereby destroy cultivation which had developed in the neighbourhood of the railway at Kunwah *ghat*. He added that the topography of the country was towards the westward from the Kosi to the Tiljuga and was full of spill channels connecting the Kosi with this river all the way down to the junction with the Ganga. Mr. Glass thought it would be better to leave things alone. He, however, thought that for any training works to be effective, it would be necessary to continue them far below Chatra and that they would require constant attention in the flood seasons.

From the documents as preserved in the National Archives it appears that the Resident at Nepal was contacted and the Maharaja Sir Bir Shamsher Jung, Prime Minister, Nepal, communicated by wire on the 27th February, 1897 that the Darbar had no objection to the works being undertaken near Chatra. Col. Wylee, Resident in Nepal, informed the Secretary to the Government of India, Foreign Department, on the 6th March, 1897 that the Nepal Government would procure food supply for the workmen and labourers as far as possible. From the Resident's letter it appears that the scheme was thought of even two years before. The Maharaja was anxious that the works at Chatra did not cause any damage to the temple and the lands in the Saptari district did not suffer any change thereby.

It is, however, not known as to why the scheme was abandoned at that time. A big Kosi conference was organised at Nirmali in 1946 under the presidentship of Dr. Rajendra Prasad. Kosi Barrage Scheme was ultimately taken up for implementation only in 1952 and formal inauguration was made in 1955.

History of the Freedom Movement.

The mutiny of 1857 was the First War of Independence in India and it shook the very foundations of the British empire in Bihar. The people of Tirhut began to think that the Government of the country was practically gone. The Maharaja of Darbhanga was suspected of making preparations against the Company. On the 28th August, H. L. Dampier wrote to the Commissioner of Circuit as follows:—"The news of the Jamadar of Belsand (*re*:—the burning of thana Masrakh) passed on to the Darogah of Katra and Jallah, the Daroga of Katra sent it on to Bhanwarah, thence it went on through Khajouli and Lawkha to Chowki Dagmara in Supaul thana (now in Saharsa district)" (*cf. Annual Report of the Bihar Regional Records Survey Committee*, pp. 7-8, 1952-53). On 26th February, 1859 Dampier wrote- "I have no doubt that the rebels will do their best to get through the *terai* to the jungles north of Bhagalpur (now Saharsa) and Purnea" (*ibid*, p. 10). The Britishers had resorted to a policy of ruthless persecution in North Bihar. Martial law was declared in Tirhut as early as July 1857. The mutineers baffled the combined efforts of Bhagalpur and Purnea authorities and they moved unmolested through the *terai* area. The mutineers were very active in different parts of the district of Saharsa and the whole district was in the throes of political upheaval. Since then, it continued to be one of the important centres in Bihar of all types of political agitation against the British Government.

The outbreak of the First World War (1914—18) was another occasion when the wave of nationalism once again swept the whole country. Bhagalpur was one of the important centres of the revolutionary adventure in the present century. The partition of Bengal had already inspired the people of Bihar in 1905 and the visit of Surendra Nath Banerjee in the first decade of this century left a great impression on the people's mind. At Sonepur fair in 1909 the foundation of the Bihar Congress was laid with branches in every district. Babu Rashbehari Mandal of Murho (Saharsa) was one of the delegates of Bihar to the 25th session of Indian National Congress at Allahabad in 1910. Others who attended the meeting as delegates from Madhepura subdivision were Maulvi Raza Hassan, Mukhtear, Vishwanath Jha Mukhtear, Anant Prasad Mandal of Murho, Babulal Mandal of Murho and Giriwar Narain Mandal of Ranipatti. The Second Provincial Conference was held at Bhagalpur in 1910 through the effort of Shri Dip Narayan Sinha. The 28th Congress Session at Bankipur in 1912 further strengthened the Congress organisation which gathered more strength after the Champaran *Satyagraha* of Mahatma Gandhi a few years after. In Bhagalpur about forty students withdrew from the college as a result of the non-co-operation movement in 1921 under the leadership of Professor Prem Sunder Bose. All these students moved to their area for the propagation of Congress ideals. As a result of the popularity of the Congress, Shri Dip Narayan Sinha

was elected Chairman of the Bhagalpur District Board (which then included Saharsa). Madhepura was the main centre of the Congress organisation from the very beginning and even before the separation of Bihar and Bengal Provincial Congress Committee. The *Khaddar* movement had gained ground here. Though Saharsa formed part of Bhagalpur, Madhepura acquired immense importance and all the leaders of eminence in the early days of Congress visited this sub-division. Among the persons who were the founders of the Congress in the first decade of this century in the district were Jainarayan Mandal, Giriwar Narayan Mandal of Ranipatti, Rashbehari Mandal of Murho, Vishwanath Jha, Raza Hussain and Rajkishore Choudhury of Madhepura.

After a short spell of a few years, Congress was again revitalised in 1928-29 after the return of Jawaharlal Nehru from Europe. An All Parties Conference was held under the presidentship of Sir Ali Imam to boycott the Simon Commission and Bihar took a lead in this matter and delegates from Saharsa district attended it. In 1929, foreign cloth boycott activities began in Bihar. During this period, Bhagalpur was the centre of revolutionary activities and a revolutionary, Sachin Bakshi, was arrested here. The Dandi March of Mahatma Gandhi synchronised with an all-India movement better known as salt *satyagraha*. By February, 1930, 770 persons were enrolled as volunteers. In the district of Saharsa, the movement was led among others by Mahtab Lal Yadava. Shivanandan Mandal, Nand Kishore Choudhury, Rajendra Mishra, Ram Bahadur Sinha, Yadunandan Jha, Rajendra Lal Das. Supaul and Madhepura jails were full of political prisoners. Thana Bihpur was the scene of great activity where Dr. Rajendra Prasad was literally beaten by the police and the people of Saharsa district were much agitated over this. Picketing went on all over the district with full vigour. The hanging of Bhagat Singh on 23rd March, 1931 was celebrated all over the district. In 1934, Mahatma Gandhi visited Saharsa. During the famous Bihar earthquake of 1934 Saharsa was much devastated and the Congress *sevadal* organisers did wonderful service. The period between 1930 and 1942 in the district of Saharsa is marked by various *kisan* agitations all over the district for *Bakast* lands.

It was Swami Sahjanand Saraswati who led the *kisan* movement and other important leaders like Rahul Sankritayan, Karyanand Sharma, Jaya Prakash Narayan, Sri Krishna Sinha and others also joined the movement. In village Pama and in Alamnagar the *kisan* movement gained ground and there was a long-drawn struggle for the *Bakast* and *Batai* lands in the major portion of the district. Shri Sheodhari Singh, Shri Shukdeo Choudhury, Shri Nageshwar Sen and others toured the district and it was occasionally visited by Swami Sahjanand Saraswati. Since the Congress was the common forum for all political activities in those days, these leaders stayed in the Congress office and addressed meetings under the auspices of the Congress. It was during this period that a student movement was also organised at Supaul and

Madhepura and both the *kisans'* and the students' organisations actively participated in the first general election that was held after the Government of India Act of 1935 was enforced. The students' movement was organised by a number of young men.

The Congress entered the election campaign in 1937 and both Madhepura and Saharsa returned Shri Shivanandan Mandal and Pt. Rajendra Mishra to the State Assembly with a thumping majority. In the first Congress Ministry in Bihar Saharsa was represented by Shri Shivanandan Mandal as a Parliamentary Secretary.

The outbreak of the Second World War in 1939 changed the course of nationalism and the Indian National Congress opposed the War policy of the British Government in India. Bihar Ministry resigned on the 31st of October, 1939. The students' movement gathered momentum and Independence Day (1940, 26th January) was celebrated all over Bihar with great enthusiasm. At Bhagalpur (which also included Saharsa) a large procession was taken from T. N. J. College compound shouting anti-imperialist war slogans and procession ended in the Congress office where it was addressed by Messrs. Shashinath Roy, Rajeshwar Prasad Mandal, Radha Krishna Chaudhary, Shyamal Kishore Jha, Shri Shivanandan Mandal and Kartik Nath Sinha. The Second Bhagalpur Students' Conference was held in the compound of Marwari *Pathsala* in 1940 and was presided over by Shri Bishwanath Mukherjee. Late Prof. M. L. Roy Choudhury of T. N. J. College, Bhagalpur, inaugurated the cultural conference. In that very year Radhakrishna Chaudhary and Rajeshwar Prasad Mandal visited the Singheshwar fair in the month of February and organised Madhepura Subdivisional Students' Conference. Rajendra Prasad Singh (ex-M. P.) was one of the main organisers of this function. Copies of "misdeeds of Mayabi Gandhi" circulated by anti-Congress elements were burnt at Bhagalpur and Singheshwar *Asthan* fair. A conference of the Bhagalpur district students in that very year was addressed by Shri Subhas Chandra Bose and another by Shri Krishna Sinha in the Lajpat park. A large number of delegates from Saharsa attended the famous Ramgarh Congress in 1940 and a few young people attended the anti-compromise conference there held under the leadership of Subhas Chandra Bose. The call for Individual Civil Disobedience Movement was well received in the district of Saharsa and a large number of persons offered *Satyagraha* at Madhepura and Supaul.

The August revolution of 1942 formed a landmark in the history of freedom movement not only in this district but the whole of India. When the All-India Congress Committee was meeting at Bombay, the Bhagalpur District Students' Federation was holding its conference at Naugachia under the presidentship of Rahul Sankritayan. The conference ended on the 10th August by which date the whole of the district was in the throes of national revolution. Firing at Naugachia

on the 14th of August caused sensations throughout the district. On the 16th August, there was firing at Nathnagar. All the educational institutions were closed.

On the 13th August a huge mass of people under the leadership of Shri Bhupendra Narain Mandal, Deota Prasad Singh and others arrived in the court compound and a young lad of 14 years named Hare Krishna Choudhury climbed the upstairs and hoisted the national flag on the treasury building of Madhepura court. All the police-stations in the subdivision were taken possession of. Pandit Chedi Jha, Ramesh Jha, Kulanand Jha, Shivanandan Mandal, Lahtan Choudhury, Shaileshwar Khan, Rambahadur Singh, Jadu Jha, Rajendra Mishra, Shatrughan Prasad, Ganga Prasad Singh, Rajendra Lal Das, Chitra Narayan Sharma, Gunanand Jha, Raghunath Jha, and others were actively leading the district. Students' squads were organised and sent to different villages for propaganda. People's courts were established at many places. On the 29th August, there was police firing at Saharsa and a number of persons were killed. The injured were brought to the Madhepura hospital for treatment. With the aid of European and Baluchi Military personnel courts were opened at Madhepura only to be closed again. A congress worker was stabbed at Sonbarsa. The military arrested Lahtan Choudhury at Supaul. Ambica Singh and other persons were arrested at Saropatti. Four persons were killed at Kishunganj as a result of firing. Rajendra Mishra was mercilessly beaten by the police who arrested Khublal Mahto of Pratapganj. Shyam Narain Mallick (a teacher) was maltreated by the military. Lalit Narain Mishra was arrested in the district of Saharsa and most of them were jailed.

After his escape from Hazaribagh Jail in 1942 Jaiprakash Narayan visited Saharsa district on his way to Nepal. Shri Siyaram Singh of Bhagalpur formed the Siyaram *Dal* which had its branches in different parts of the district of Saharsa. Shri Nagendra Kishore Verma acted as courier of Siyaram *Dal* and established contact with Jaiprakash Narayan. In December, 1942, Siyaram Singh met Jaiprakash Narayan in Nepal where a conference of the workers of Bihar was held under the presidentship of Shivanandan Mandal.

On August 15, 1947, the country became independent.

CHAPTER III.

PEOPLE.

GROWTH OF POPULATION.

The present district of Saharsa was a part of Bhagalpur district till April, 1954, comprising the two subdivisions, i.e., Madhepura and Supaul. As the areas were far off from Bhagalpur, the headquarters of the district, on the other side of the river Ganga and the constant Kosi river ravages were a great problem, it was felt that there should be a separate district unit of administration. The communications in Madhepura and Supaul are still very undeveloped and it takes days for one to reach Tribeniganj or Birpur from Bhagalpur, now the divisional headquarters for Saharsa district.

Madhepura and Supaul were made into a sub-district with an Additional District Magistrate, posted at Saharsa from the 1st June 1944. The status of a sub-district continued till 31st March 1954. On the 1st April 1954, it was given the status of a full-fledged district with an area of 2,143 square miles and a population of 13,08,198 souls under the Bhagalpur Division. Since April, 1954, it has three subdivisions, i.e., Saharsa Sadar, Madhepura and Supaul. The *District Census Handbook of Saharsa* (1951) mentions only two subdivisions, i.e., Madhepura and Supaul. Sadar subdivision was created in 1954 out of the previous Madhepura subdivision only.

The variations in population from 1901 to 1961 were as follows*:—

nsus Year	Persons.	Variation.	Net variation. 1901—1951 1901—1961.	Males.	Variation.	Females.	Variation.
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
901	10,70,210	..	.	5,32,337	..	5,37,873	..
911	11,03,281	+33,071	..	5,49,965	+17,528	5,53,316	+15,443
921	10,67,125	—36,156	..	5,37,825	—12,140	5,29,300	—24,016
931	11,20,668	+ 53,543	..	5,70,079	+32,254	5,50,589	+21,259
941	11,35,818	+15,150	..	5,78,867	+8,788	5,56,951	+6,362
951	13,08,198	+1,72,380	+2,37,988	6,72,677	+93,810	6,35,521	+78,570
961	17,23,566	+4,15,368	+6,53,356	8,86,440	+2,13,763	8,37,126	+2,01,605

* *District Census Handbook of Saharsa* (1951), published in 1956, p. 8. *Census of India—Final Population Totals* (1961 Census), pp. 332-333.

The growth of population from 1872 to 1951 has been discussed in the book *Census of India* (1951) as follows*:—

"Saharsa recorded an increase of only 4.4 per cent at the 1881 census. In all probability the population remained more or less stationary during the 1872—80 period. The Kosi had started on a westward swing between 1850 and 1875, and was moving more and more into this district. In the 1881—90 decade the population increased by 5.8 per cent, the main increase being in the Supaul and Bangaon while due to the ravages of the Kosi, there was a sharp fall in the population of Kishanganj thana and only small increases in Madhepura and Pratapganj thanas."

It will be useful to study the population trends in the two neighbouring districts of Purnea and Darbhanga along with the trend in Saharsa.

During the next decade (1881—1900), the population of Saharsa district increased by 1.2 per cent only while the district of Darbhanga showed an increase of 3.9 per cent and Purnea district decrease of 3.6 per cent. The increase in population of Saharsa district during the period under review was mainly in the Pratapganj thana and at the same time there was a fall in the population of Kishanganj and Madhepura thanas which were greatly affected by the Kosi.

In the next decade (1901—10), the population of Saharsa district increased by 3.1 per cent. The districts of Purnea and Darbhanga recorded an increase of 6 per cent and 3.9 per cent respectively. During this period (1901—10), the Kosi had moved further west from Saharsa district and the population of Kishanganj thana which had suffered a large fall during the two previous decades now increased by 40 per cent, while Pratapganj, Bangaon and Supaul lost in population. Apparently Kosi inundation meant a denudation of the population either by shifting or by mortality due to Kosi ravages.

As in other districts, the growth of population received a severe set-back in the next decade (1911—20). There were severe outbreaks of cholera in 1915 and 1916. Cholera took a heavy casualty also in 1911 and 1918. The 1918 epidemic of cholera was followed by the great influenza epidemic which continued for some years. The severe mortality from influenza epidemic was general in other districts but not in Purnea district. The 1921 census showed a decrease in population of 3.2 per cent for Saharsa district while the

* *Census of India* (1951), Volume V, Part I—Report, pp. 28—30.

two neighbouring districts of Purnea and Darbhanga showed an increase of 1.8 per cent and a fall of 0.56 per cent respectively. There was a fall of population in every thana of Saharsa district except Kishanganj which again recorded a substantial increase owing largely to migration from other thanas under pressure of the Kosi floods.

During the decade 1921—30, the climatic conditions were generally favourable. There were very heavy and persistent floods in the Kosi in 1927. But conditions were not bad generally in the other years though malaria and bowel complaints were acute in the Kosi-affected tracts. There was no severe epidemic of cholera or small-pox, and plague had disappeared completely. The 1931 census showed a population increase of 5 per cent, the main increase being in Bangaon, Madhepura and Supaul thanas, while there was an actual decrease in the population of Pratapganj and Kishanganj thanas which were badly affected by the ravages of Kosi. In the same decade Purnea and Darbhanga districts had an increase of 8.2 and 3.67 per cent respectively.

In the next decade (1931—40), the population of Saharsa district increased by only 1.4 per cent while Purnea and Darbhanga districts showed an increase of 9.4 and 9.2 per cent respectively. There were no serious outbreaks of either cholera or plague in Saharsa district during the decade under review. The decline in the rate of growth in the district appears to have been due solely to the ravages of the Kosi in the Supaul subdivision where the population declined by 12.3 per cent. At the same time the population of Madhepura subdivision increased by 12.7 per cent. Part of the increase in Madhepura was no doubt due to the movement of population from the Kosi-affected areas in Supaul. Since Supaul subdivision was badly affected, a large part of the population had to shift to the neighbouring areas. The high increase of population in Purnea and Darbhanga districts appears to be partially due to this population shift. It is also believed that some people went over to the Nepal territory.

In the decade 1941—50 the population of Saharsa sub-district had increased by 15.1 per cent, which was the highest recorded increase during the period for any district in North Bihar. The increase in population in Purnea and Darbhanga districts were 5.6 and 9.0 per cent respectively. Madhepura subdivision records this increase as Supaul subdivision actually had a decline in population in spite of the fact that the Kosi had moved further west. The decrease this time was only 3.3 per cent as compared with 12.3 per cent in 1931—40 decade. Undoubtedly a part of the increase in Madhepura subdivision was due to migration of population from Supaul subdivision and from the Kosi-affected parts in Darbhanga

district. The comparative respite of the district from the ravages of Kosi partially account for this increase of population in Saharsa district.

During 1951—60 Saharsa district had an increase of population by 31.75 per cent against Purnea district's accretion of 37.16 per cent. Darbhanga district had an accretion of 17.07 per cent.

The population explosion in Saharsa district as disclosed in 1961 census is an interesting study. By 1960 due to vigorous efforts of the Health Department, Malaria and Kala-azar had been controlled and the previous mortality rate from these diseases was checked. There was a general improvement of health owing to partial control of Kosi river. The Kosi Project had been partially implemented and the embankments gave security to the cultivation lands and much of *kans* and *pater* infected lands were reclaimed. *Kans* and *pater* are wild species with long roots that grow luxuriantly on the Kosi-ravaged sandy lands of the district and completely throw the land out of cultivation. Many of the emigrants obviously returned to the district and the villages were rehabilitated. Cultivation of abandoned lands were again taken up. Most of the lands infected by *kans* and *pater* started yielding crops. The wild fauna had been almost eliminated in the district because of shooting campaigns sponsored by the State.* The wild fauna was no longer a menace to the crops. There was also an accretion to the population due to the employment requirements of the Kosi Project. A remarkable incidence of urbanisation was noticed. The various development projects in the different Blocks brought in an addition to the population. The district has definitely turned the corner and the Kosi-dominated economy was in the melting pot. At present we find a changed district—the abandoned villages are rehabilitated, the lands ravaged by the Kosi river are resuscitated and the wily unpredictable shifts of the current of Kosi and her large number of branches have been controlled. The incidence of mortality has gone down. There has been very little check on the fertility of the people. The district is now an excellent example of the trends that have been described as "agricultural birth-rate" and those trends as "industrial death-rate".

The creation of Saharsa as an independent district in 1954 opened a large number of Government offices scattered throughout the district which has brought in a large number of Government employees. The period under review has had a definite shift to urbanisation in some areas. Birpur, a village in 1951 with a population of 1,896 persons only has now become a town with 8,061 persons. Birpur is one of the important headquarters of Kosi Project. Bhimnagar, a petty village on the frontier

*This scheme sponsored by the Waste Land Reclamation Section of the Revenue Department was very popular and ran for several years.

of Nepal, has grown immensely because of the influx of workers and supervisory staff in connection with the Kosi barrage scheme. Bhimnagar is a very important terminus for various bus routes connecting Saharsa with Purnea district.* Bathnaha was also an insignificant village before but now (1963) is an important Kosi colony. The development of Bhimnagar and Birpur has brought Nepal nearer to India and trade and commerce with Nepal have immensely developed. There is much more of intermingling of the people of the two countries because of easier communication.

Madhepura, a subdivisional headquarters, had a population of 9,880 persons in 1951 as against the population of 11,832 persons in 1961 census. Madhepura has a much larger market than that of Saharsa, the district headquarters. The civil courts for the entire district are only located at Madhepura. Murliganj village in 1951 had only 2,397 persons but has now become a town with 9,848 persons. Murliganj is a very big trade centre. Nirmali, another village in 1951 census with a population of 2,762 persons, is now a town with 5,432 souls. Nirmali also has commercial importance. In 1951, Saharsa, the district headquarters, had a population of 10,299 persons only. The present population is 14,803. Supaul, the headquarters of the subdivision of the same name, has now 17,460 persons.† Supaul was practically devastated by the ravages of Kosi river before. Bihariganj has also grown in commercial importance.

POPULATION ACCORDING TO SUBDIVISION, REVENUE THANAS AND ANCHALS.

It has been mentioned earlier that during 1951 there were only two subdivisions, i.e., Madhepura and Supaul. The district has now three subdivisions, i.e., Saharsa Sadar, Madhepura and Supaul. The Sadar subdivision was carved out of the previous Madhepura subdivision. Madhepura subdivision had three revenue thanas, i.e., Bangaon, Kishanganj and Madhepura. Bangaon revenue thana remained entirely in Sadar subdivision and police-stations Sour Bazar and Sonbarsa were grouped into Sadar subdivision after taking in some of the villages and *Chowkidari* unions under the above police-stations from the revenue thanas of Madhepura and Kishanganj.

* It may be mentioned that Shivnagar, a prosperous village near Bhimnagar, has now been washed away by the Kosi floods. There was a police thana at Shivnagar.

† *Census of India, Paper no. 1 of* 1962, 1961 *Census, Final Population Totals* p. 176.

The table below shows the population figures according

Subdivisions and Revenue thanas.	Popu					
	1921.			1931.		
	Persons.	Males.	Females.	Persons.	Males.	Females.
1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Supaul Subdivision	4,88,557	2,43,048	2,45,509	5,08,989	2,56,227	2,57,762
Supaul Revenue Thana.	3,53,837	1,75,144	1,78,693	3,84,789	1,92,769	1,92,020
Pratapganj Revenue Thana.	1,34,720	67,904	66,816	1,24,200	63,458	60,742
Madhepura Subdivision.	5,78,568	2,94,777	2,83,791	6,11,679	3,13,852	2,97,827
Bangaon Revenue Thana.	1,45,398	71,844	73,554	1,64,595	81,304	83,291
Madhepura Revenue Thana.	2,53,740	1,31,743	1,26,997	2,74,262	1,41,825	1,32,437
Kishanganj Revenue Thana.	1,74,430	91,190	83,240	1,72,822	90,723	82,099

The table below shows the area, towns, villages and number
1921 to

Subdivisions and Revenue Thanas.	Area in square miles.				Number			
					Towns.			
	1921.	1931.	1941.	1951.	1921.	1931.	1941.	1951.
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
SUPAUL SUBDIVISION ..	934	934	934	987	..	..	..	..
Supaul Revenue Thana ..	593	593	593	657	..	..	..	..
Pratapganj Revenue Thana ..	341	341	341	330	..	..	..	..
MADHEPURA SUBDIVISION ..	1,176	1,176	1,176	1,156	..	..	..	..
Bangaon Revenue Thana ..	263	263	263	263	..	..	..	..
Madhepura Revenue Thana ..	547	547	547	541	..	..	..	..
Kishanganj Revenue Thana ..	368	366	366	352	..	..	..	..

* Authorities consulted—*Census of India*, 1921, Volume VII, p. VI (Provincial *of India*, 1941, Volume VII, p. 90 and *District Census Handbook of Saharsa*,

to the subdivisions and revenue thanas from 1921 to 1951:—

lation.

1941.			1951.		
Persons.	Males.	Females.	Persons.	Males.	Females.
8	9	10	11	12	13
4,46,355	2,24,171	2,22,184	4,31,547	2,20,269	2,11,278
2.99,948	1,49,647	1,50,301	2,15,729	1,11,827	1,03,902
1,46,407	74,524	71,883	2,15,818	1,08,442	1,07,376
6,89,463	3,54,696	3,34,767	8,76,651	4,52,408	4,24,243
1,33,077	67,003	66,074	1,64,050	82,926	81,124
3,34,745	1,71,814	1,62,931	4,37,078	2,25,146	2,11,932
2,21,641	1,15,879	1,05,762	2,75,523	1,44,336	1.31,187

of occupied houses in different subdivisions and revenue thanas from 1951*:—

of —				Number of occupied houses.			
Villages.							
1921.	1931.	1941.	1951.	1921.	1931.	1941.	1951.
10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17
897	484	501	467	82,376	89,330	86,168	1,01,309
294	294	291	..	57,901	67,476	58,835	..
203	190	210	..	24,475	21,845	27,333	..
768	641	611	801	85,208	1,13,035	2,05,907	1,66,331
183	160	165	..	9,406	29,946	72,864	..
381	264	263	..	49,687	50,110	85,730	..
204	197	183	..	26,115	32,979	47,313	..

Table I), *Census of India*, 1931, Volume VII, p. VI (Provincial Table I), *Census* 1951, pp 2. 80-81.

In the census of 1961 the population figures according to revenue thanas were omitted and Anchal-wise population figures were introduced. The table below shows the subdivision-wise and Anchal-wise population as enumerated at the census of 1961:—

Dsitrict, Subdivisions and Anchals.	Population.					Number of occupied houses.
	Persons.	Males.	Females.	Urban.	Rural.	
1	2	3	4	5	6	7
SAHARSA ..	17,23,566	8,86,440	8,37,440	67,429	16,56,139	2,64,235
SADAR SUBDIVISION ..	4,17,881	2,13,037	2,04,844	14,803	4,03,078	56,177
Kahara Anchal ..	81,689	42,559	39,130	14,083	66,886	9,999
Nauhatta Anchal ..	61,823	31,211	30,612	..	61,823	8,485
Mahishi Anchal ..	83,857	41,900	41,957	..	83,857	13,140
Gourbazar Anchal ..	1,08,758	55,397	53,361	..	1,08,758	13,198
Sonbarsa Anchal ..	81,754	41,970	39,784	..	81,754	11,355
SUPAUL SUBDIVISION ..	6,63,339	3,40,236	3,23,103	30,944	6,32,395	1,01,906
Supaul Anchal ..	1,12,802	57,552	55,250	17,460	95,342	16,687
Pipra Anchal ..	63,617	32,142	31,477	..	63,617	8,847
Nirmali Anchal ..	51,678	26,501	25,177	5,423	46,255	9,063
Tribeniganj Anchal ..	99,958	51,210	48,748	..	99,958	14,176
Kishanpur Anchal ..	69,587	35,230	34,357	..	69,587	11,298
Maraona Anchal ..	34,608	17,286	17,322	..	34,608	6,552
Raghopur Anchal ..	94,916	48,551	46,365	..	94,916	14,066
Basantpur Anchal ..	53,255	29,307	23,948	8,061	45,194	9,463
Chhatapur Anchal ..	82,918	42,459	40,459	..	82,918	11,754
MADHEPURA SUBDIVISION	6,42,346	3,33,167	3,09,179	21,680	6,20,666	1,06,152
Madhepura Anchal ..	1,05,637	54,754	50,883	11,832	93,805	14,068
Murliganj Anchal ..	67,109	50,150	46,959	9,848	87,261	16,507
Kumarkhand Anchal ..	80,921	41,868	39,053	.	80,921	13,647
Singhoshwar Anchal ..	1,02,589	52,623	49,966	..	1,02,589	15,389
Kishanganj Anchal ..	1,22,523	63,648	58,875	..	1,22,523	21,714
Alamnagar Anchal ..	65,377	34,449	30,928	..	65,377	12,101
Chausa Anchal ..	68,190	35,675	32,515	..	68,190	12,226

*Office of the Superintendent of Census Operations, Bihar, Patna, has supplied the figures.

EMIGRATION AND IMMIGRATION.

The incidence of emigration from the district of Saharsa, particularly from the Supaul subdivision seems to be high due to the ravages of the Kosi floods. Before the construction of the Kosi embankments, devastation by Kosi was almost a regular feature. In North Bihar the main targets of devastation of the Kosi were large parts of the districts of Saharsa, Purnea, Darbhanga and some parts of North Monghyr. The agricultural labourers were hard hit and emigration was more confined among them during the slack agricultural season. The *Census Report of India, Bihar* (1951) mentions that "There is also a good deal of emigration of cultivating labourers from Bihar to Nepal during harvesting season particularly because the wages offered are somewhat higher than in Bihar. This kind of emigration has grown in volume to some extent due to the devastation caused by the Kosi over the bordering areas in the Supaul subdivision of the Saharsa district, and in portions of Darbhanga district".*

The pre-1951 emigration figures are not available for this district. The 1951 census report does not mention the emigration figures outside the State. It appears that emigration within the State in 1951 from Saharsa district was 914 per 10,000 of general population or 9.14 per cent of the total population. The 1961 census figures are still to be finalised (March, 1963). The comparative 1951 emigration figures of the other bordering two sister districts of North Bihar, i.e., Purnea and Darbhanga will be of interest. Purnea accounts for 69 and Darbhanga 234 per 10,000 of the total population within the State. The incidence of emigration in Saharsa district is higher.

The incidence of immigration in Saharsa district has been remarkable due to the creation of an independent district in 1954, and the launching of the Kosi Project. After the creation of the district a large number of Government offices were opened throughout the district. A large number of offices and residential buildings had to be built. Many contractors and a vast labour force came into the district from outside. The implementation of the Kosi Project also brought to the district a large number of Government employees, labourers and contractors from outside the district. The Kosi Project with the help of embankments gave a sense of security and many of the emigrants have now returned to their villages. The eradication of the *kans* and *pater* menace was a boon to the owners of the sanded tracts and cultivation was resumed. National Extension Service Blocks have sponsored development schemes and the previous eerie look of the countryside is rapidly changing.

* *Census of India, Bihar* (1951), Volume V, Part I—Report, pp. 54-55.

The immigration figures are not available for this district before 1951 census. The following statement shows the number and proportion of immigrants in Saharsa district in the year 1951*:—

Total.				Per 10,000 of general population.
1951.				1951.
57,062	..	..	..	436

The figures mentioned above indicate that the immigrants constituted nearly 4.36 per cent of the total population in the year 1951. The immigration figures for 1961 census are not yet finalised (March, 1963). Purnea accounts for 7.52 and Darbhanga 2.56 per 10,000 of the total population in 1951 census within the State. Migrants from Nepal and Pakistan according to 1951 Census were 922 and 91 respectively.

DISTRIBUTION OF URBAN AND RURAL POPULATION.

No separate urban population prior to 1961 was shown in the 1951 *District Census Handbook for Saharsa.* In 1951 census there were altogether 1,268 villages with a total population of 13,08,198 (males 6,72,677 and females 6,35,521)†.

In 1961 census there are altogether 1,340 villages and six towns, namely, Birpur, Madhepura, Murliganj, Nirmali, Saharsa and Supaul.** The total population of the district according to 1961 census is 17,23,566 persons. Out of this the rural population is 16,56,139 and the urban population is 67,427.

It has to be mentioned here that the concept of a town till 1951 was the population of 5,000 persons and above. According to this conception Madhepura, Saharsa, Supaul and Murliganj were towns even in 1951. It is not understood why on page 2 of the *District Census Hand-Book of Saharsa* it was mentioned that in 1951 there were no towns. For 1961 census a different criteria have been fixed. Only places with the population of more than 5,000 persons or with the density of more than 1,000 persons per square mile or if at least 75 per cent of adult male population are engaged in non-agricultural occupations the area will be taken as a town. A city in Census means a place with one lakh and above population.

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* *Census of India*, 1951, Volume V, Bihar, Part I—Report, p. 68.

† *District Census Handbook of Saharsa*, 1951, p. 2.

** *Census of India.*—Final Population Totals, 1961 Bihar, pp. 176—178; office of the Superintendent of Census Operations, Bihar, Patna.

District.	Number and name of town.	Area in square miles/square kilometers.	Population. Persons.	1961 Males.	1961 Females.	1951 persons.	Total villages in the district and constituent villages with thana number within bracket.	Total population of the villages as enumerated in 1951 census.
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
SAHARSA	6	2,105.5/5,453 2	17,23,566	8,86 440	8,37,126	13,08,198	1,340	..
	Birpur ..	5.19/13.44 ..	8,061	4,946	3,115	3,033	Birpur (5)	1,896
							Basantpur (6) . ..	1,004
							Hanuman Nagar (49)	133
	Madhepura	3.06/7.93 ..	11,832	6,763	5,069	10,567	Madhepura (Part) (61) ..	9,880
							Birkhi Uttarwari (65)	2,520
							Birkhi Dakhinwari (66) ..	232
							Birkhi Amanat (68)	205
	Murliganj	4.94/12.97 ..	9,848	5,229	4,619	7,498	Ghegha (262)	693
							Jairampur Jagir (263)	30
							Jairampur (264)	1,713
							Murliganj Jagir (265)	2,665
							Murliganj (266)	2,397
	Nirmali ..	2.04/5.28 ..	5 423	2,843	2,580	2,762	Nirmali (97) . ..	2,762
	Saharsa (N)†	5.43/14.06 .	14,803	8,531	6,272	10,299	Saharsa (189)	10,299
	Supaul ..	8.50/22.02 ..	17,400	9,297	8,163	9,709	Kharail (Part) (152)	3,320
							Supaul (215)	4,298
							Chakla Nirmali (217)	1,190
							Golurgarha (218)	901

*Office of the Superintendent of Census Operations, Bihar, Patna (*Census of India*—Final Population Totals, 1961 Census), pp. 176—178.

†N—Notified Area Committee.

*Density per square mile.**

Subdivision.		1901.	1911.	1921.	1931.	1941.	1951.
1		2	3	4	5	6	7
Madhepura	..	476	518	492	520	586	578
Supaul	..	547	529	523	545	478	437

In 1961 Census Saharsa has three subdivisions, Saharsa Sadar, Madhepura and Supaul. The density of these subdivisions in 1961 census was 908, 930, 720 persons per square mile respectively.

The density indicated above may be considered in the background of the density of the State of Bihar which in different census years is as follows:—

Density per square mile.

		1901.	1911.	1921.	1931.	1941.	1951.	1961.
1		2	3	4	5	6	7	8
State of Bihar	..	407	423	418	466	521	575	691

DISPLACED PERSONS.

The partition of the country into two sovereign and independent States, India and Pakistan, in August, 1947 and the violent communal disturbances which both preceded and followed it, gave rise to a large-scale movement of population from West and East Pakistan to different States in India. A large number of East and West Pakistan displaced persons have been rehabilitated in the different districts of Bihar. Some of the Bengalis, Punjabis and Sindhis have settled down in the district of Saharsa also.

* Authorities consulted :—

Census of India, 1921, Volume VII, p. VI (Provincial Table I);

Census of India, 1931, Volume VII, p. VI (Provincial Table I);

Census of India, 1941, Volume VII, pp. 12, 90;

District Census Handbook of Saharsa, 1951, pp. 80-81;

Census of India—Final Population Totals, 1961 Census p. 382 and office of the Superintendent of Census Operations, Bihar, Patna.

The table below quoted from the *Census of India*, 1951, Volume V, Part IIA-Table, pp. 338-339, shows the number of displaced persons who came to this district (then a sub-district) from both West and East Pakistan between 1947—1949:—

Name of the district.	Total population.			Displaced persons.											
				From West Pakistan.						From East Pakistan.					
				1947.		1948.		1949.		1947.		1948.		1949.	
	Persons.	Males	Females	Males.	Females.	Males.	Females.	Males.	Females.	Males.	Females.	Males.	Females.	Males.	Females.
Saharsa	304	157	147	20	22	25	25	4	4	53	36	46	50	9	10

There appears to be some confusion as in the official records at Saharsa it is reported there is no mention of any Refugee Camp or any refugee from Pakistan during 1947—1949. Two of the files in the Record Room of Saharsa Collectorate give the following details:—

(*i*) The Additional District Magistrate, Saharsa, informed the Additional Deputy Secretary to Government, Relief and Rehabilitation Department (Directorate of Pakistan Refugees), Bihar, Patna, in his memo. no. 3586, dated the 17th May, 1948 (File 'XCIX-7|48) that there were no Pakistan Refugees in the district (then sub-district). This information was sent to the State Government on receipt of Government letter no. 2058-D.P.R., dated the 29th April, 1948.

(*ii*) The Magistrate Incharge, Saharsa, reported to the State Government in memo. no. 6201, dated the 13th August, 1948, that there were no Pakistan Refugees in the sub-district (File no. XCIX-8|48).

It was, however, gathered that a few of the East and West Pakistan refugees had actually arrived in the district during the period under review. It was also found that the Refugee Colony at Kahra near Saharsa town was constructed between 1947 and 1949. There was also a proposal for another colony at Supaul but it did not materialise and another colony was constructed at Lahi Paras at Birpur only just a few months before the displaced persons arrived from Bettiah Camp.

The East Pakistan refugees of the district were transferred from Bettiah Refugee Camp in 1958-59. They are living in the two refugee colonies, one at Kahra *mohalla* (Saharsa town) and the other at Lahi Paras (Birpur). The total number of families of displaced persons from East Pakistan in both the camps is 98. Out of this total there are 73 families (25 agriculturists and 48 non-agriculturists) at Lahi Paras colony and 25 non-agriculturist families at Kahra colony. The main occupation of the agriculturist families of the Lahi Paras colony is cultivation and they also work as field labourers. For the purchase of land, seed and livestock they had been given agricul-turists loans. Their present economic condition is not satisfactory. The non-agriculturists hold small shops where they sell cloth and other sundry goods or hawk. Some are working as labourers.

The table below shows the amount of loans advanced to the families from 1958-59 to 1960-61:—

Name of the colony.	Number of families.	Amount of loan in rupees in different years. 1958-59.	1959-60.	1960-61.
Lahi Paras (Birpur) ..	25 Agriculturists ..	1,02,818	43,518	19,212
	48 Non-Agriculturists ..	56,504	70,252	39,950
Kahra (Saharsa) ..	25 Agriculturists ..	32,842	16,500	28,457

The total amount advanced as loan between 1958-59 to 1960-61 comes to Rs. 4,10,053.00 only. The total amount of maintenance grant which was given in 1958-59 to 50 agriculturist families (25 families of each colony) comes to Rs. 1,400.00 only. Since 1961-62 the Government has stopped these loans as a result of a change in the policy of the Government. The number of displaced persons was not recorded at the census of 1961. It may, however, be said that the displaced persons have merged in the general population.

LANGUAGE.

The table below shows the number of persons in the district speaking different languages as mother tongue according to 1951 census*:—

Languages.	Persons.	Males.	Females.
Total population	13,08,198	6,72,677	6,35,521
Indo-Aryan Languages—			
Hindi	12,93,140	6,66,965	6,26,175
Bengali	11,873	4,050	7,823
Punjabi	3	2	1
Marwari	852	492	360
Nepali	414	238	176
Oriya	79	73	6
Munda—			
Santhali	1,759	835	924
Dravidian Languages—			
Malto	78	22	56

Urdu had not been treated separately and was clubbed along with Hindi. Though Urdu has a separate entity but for the facility of the interested persons in the language, the census of 1951 had given the number of Urdu speaking people as 63,802.

Hindi has been shown to be the principal language of the district. Maithili-speaking people have also been put under Hindi-speaking section. This has been done in 1961 census also, the figures of which are still being finalised (March, 1963). According to the census of 1951 the Hindi-speaking people were about 98.8 per cent of the total population. The small Bengali population is mostly concentrated at Madhepura and Supaul towns. Most of them have migrated from Bhagalpur, Purnea and West Bengal. There are some very old Bengali families that have produced eminent doctors, lawyers, teachers, etc. In contrast to the Bengalis who have made Saharsa district their home, the Marwaris and the Punjabis (excepting the displaced persons) have been in the district more for business

* *District Census Handbook of Saharsa* (1951), p. 60.

purposes. The small Nepali population is mostly migratory although a few families have permanently settled down in the district.

The contribution of Saharsa district to Maithili and Hindi literature has been discussed elsewhere. There are still quite a few persons in this district who can freely converse and give impromptu speeches in Sanskrit.

The Sikhs and Sindhis of the district speak their own languages, i.e., Punjabi and Sindhi, which was disclosed by an investigation made in the month of February, 1963.

Kaithi and Devanagari character are used for Hindi. Though Maithili has got its separate script Devanagari character is generally used by the Maithils. The Bengali population use the Bengali script. The Bengali-speaking people of the district also speak Maithili and a few of the migrants speak the *"Chhikka Chhikki Boli"* of Bhagalpur district. Gurumukhi script is used by the Sikhs of the district.

Bilingualism.

The table below shows the number of persons who commonly use another Indian language in their everyday life in addition to their mother tongue as enumerated at the census of 1951*:—

Mother tongue.	Total speakers.	Total persons returned as speaking a language subsidiary to that shown in column 1.	Subsidiary languages.	
1	2	3		4
Hindi ..	12,93,140	3,712	Bengali	2,699
			Nepali	271
			Santali	248
			Marwari	494
Bengali ..	11,873	2,045	Hindi	1,941
			Marwari	104
Nepali ..	414	175	Hindi	175
Marwari ..	852	269	Hindi	269
Santali ..	1,759	414	Hindi	373
			Bengali	41
Malto (Paharia) ..	78	38	Hindi	38

The figures for 1961 census have not yet been finalised (March, 1963).

* *District Census Handbook of Saharsa*, 1951, p. 61.

Language and Literature.

Maithili is spoken by the majority of the population. Though Maithili has been clubbed together with Hindi as a language in the census as mentioned earlier, Maithili is claimed to be a separate language.

So far Maithili language and script are concerned, the re-written *Darbhanga Gazetteer* gives a detailed description but some of the features may be reiterated.

Bihar has got three linguistic units, Maithili in the east, Magahi in the south and Bhojpuri in the west. All these three belong to the same group as Bengali, Assamese and Oriya. Like Bengali, Assamese and Oriya, they are the direct descendants of the old form of speech, known as Magadhi Prakrita and have so much in common with them in their inflexional system that it would almost be possible to make one grammar for all of them.

Maithili has a script of her own, called Tirhuta, which is wonderfully alike Bengali, Oriya and Assamese. The earliest specimens of Maithili script are found in the inscription of the Mandar hill (Bhagalpur) from where it was brought to Baidyanath Dham where it was noticed by Dr. Rajendra Lal Mitra. Dr. Mitra published it in the second number of the *Journal of the Asiatic Society of Bengal for the year* 1883 on pages 190-191 (Inscription no. 3). This was inscribed during the reign of Aditya Sena of the Gupta dynasty towards the end of the 7th century A.D.* Several of the manuscripts of Maithili character are scattered in the different manuscript libraries and in Nepal there are many manuscripts very old, perhaps the oldest known so far. *Srimad Bhagavata* in Maithili script by Vidyapati is still preserved in the Raj Library, Darbhanga. This was written by Vidyapati in the first quarter of the 15th century. Though several of the manuscripts have perished both at Darbhanga and Saharsa but from the manuscripts which are available it appears that the Maithili script has retained its main distinctive features. The style of writing may have varied from area to area in different times but the script has not changed in form or script.

Maithili evolved long before the invasion of North Eastern India by the Nagari alphabet and this has had therefore very little influence on the development of Maithili script. In Mithila, however, the native script has survived up to the present day though it has now been completely displaced for all practical purposes by Devanagari script. The Maithilis read the Hindi books in Devanagari character but for writing they still use Maithili script. The introduction of compulsory teaching of Hindi as the vernacular of the Maithil boys in schools and colleges led to a lesser use of Maithili script.

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* Vide foot-note on page 61 of the *History of Bengal*, Vol. I, edited by Dr. R. C. Majumdar.

Maithili has an unbroken literary record, from the 13th century probably much earlier, down to the present day. The beginnings of the literature in the language of Mithila, as of all other literatures, can be traced back to popular poetry and what is common to all such cases, it is very difficult to assign any definite date to these early popular compositions.* A few of the litterateurs may be mentioned.

Varna Ratnakara of Jyotishwar Thakur of early 14th century stands as a very important landmark in the literary tradition of Maithili. The great Maithil poet Vidyapati has made himself immortal by his compositions in Maithili language. It is on his Maithili lyric songs that his fame chiefly rests and they may be divided into four distinct classes—love-lyrics (*Padas*), devotional songs, occasional songs and riddles (*kutas*).

Another poet is Goswami Lakshmi Nath Paramhans.† Lakshminath was born at the village Parsarma (Supaul subdivision) but later shifted to Bangaon (Saharsa Sadar) in the Vikram Samvat about 1850 (1762 A.D.). His father Pandit Bachcha Jha was a middle class man. The young boy was much interested in *Yoga, Pranayam,* etc. He was sent to the famous Pandit Sri Ratta Jha of village Jonki Mahinathpur in Darbhanga for proper schooling. At first he was given training in Astrology science but he was least interested in. He was very much interested in *Tantra Shastra.*

After completing his studies at Ratta Jha's place he returned to his village Parsarma. He translated *Geeta* in poem form in *Braj Bhasa.* He wanted to lead the life like a *Brahmchari* but he had to marry. He was much interested in *Tantra Sadhana.*

He died probably in 1873 A.D. His works are mostly in Tulsidasa's style and the language is Maithili mixed with *Braj Bhasa* but some of them are in pure Maithili. Some of his works are—

(1) *Shree Krishna Ratnawali* (Translation of *Bhagwat Geeta*).

(2) *Shree Rama Geetawali* (Character of Rama in *Bhajans*).

(3) *Krishna Geetawali* (Character of Krishna in *Bhajans*).

(4) *Bhasa Tatwa Bodha* (Translation of Shankaracharya's *Tatwa Bodha*).

(5) *Prashnottari* (Translation of Shankaracharya's *Prashnottari*).

(6) *Rama Ratnawali* (The importance of *Ramanama* is described in poems).

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* For more details please see the *Revised District Gazetteer of Darbhanga.*

† *Goswami Lakshminath Paramhans Ki Vrihat Jiwani* by Pandit Chhedi Jha Durgaar of Bangaon.

(7) *Guru Pachisi* (The importance of *Guru* has been described in twenty-five *Dohas*).

(8) *Akshara Chautisa* (Thirty-four *Dohas* on Thirty-four alphabets or *Akshars*).

Chhatranath Jha (about 1775 A.D. to 1840 A.D.) of village Bangaon was a poet. His works all in Maithili are *Bangaon Varnan, Draupadi Pukar, Hanuman Ravana Samvad, Gopi Udhava Samvad, Sudama Charita.* His works in manuscript form are *Lok Geet, Samasya Purti, Savaiya Bandana,* etc.

Pundit Baldeo Mishra was born in the year 1889 at village Bangaon and has written a number of books in Maithili, Sanskrit and Hindi. *Kalidasa* is his most famous published work in Sanskrit. Two of his works of *Bangaonak Itihas* (History of Bangaon) in Maithili and *Ganita Ka Itihas* (in four volumes) have not yet been published.

Jadunath Jha, Pulkit Lall Das and Jagdish Kavi are well known poets. Chhedi Jha "Dwijwar" of village Bangaon has published a number of works in Maithili like *Vaidehi Banavas, Koili Duti, Chhedi Satasai,* etc. Rajendra Jha of Bangaon is a writer in Hindi and Maithili and has written "Deshamani" based on Shakespeare's Othello.

Professor Radha Krishna Choudhary has written '*Mithila Ka Rajnitik Itihas*' and a large number of articles. Some of the other recent writers in Maithili are Professors Hitnarayan Jha, Mayanand Mishra, Umesh Mishra, Shyam Sundar Ghosh, Pandit Sadanand Jha Shastri, Jagdish Vihawal, Harishankar Salabh, Jageshwar Jha, Baidyanath Jha, Pandey Lallan Prasad, Ramesh Chandra Verma, Laliteswar Mullik, Prakash Lall Das, etc.

Religion and Caste.

Religion.

According to the table in the *District Census Handbook of Saharsa*, 1951 (pp. 62-63), the total population of the district was 13,08,198 (males 6,72,677 and females 6,35,521). Out of this total Hindus count 12,24,616 (males 6,28,643 and females 5,95,973), Muslims 83,235 (males 43,831 and females 39,404), Christians 251 (males 149 and females 102) and Jains 96 (males 54 and females 42). The language table shows that there were 852 persons speaking Marwari language. Most of the Marwaris are Jains.

The annexed table shows the distribution of population by religion for Saharsa district as recorded in the census of 1961*:—

Total Rural Urban.	Total.			Budhists.		Christians.		Hindus.		Jains.		Jews.	
	Persons.	Males.	Females.	Males.	Females.	Males.	Females.	Males.	Females.	Males.	Females.	Males.	Females.
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14
Total	17,23,566	8,86,440	8,37,126	33	9	806	610	7,87,884	7,45,779	458	326	Nil	Nil.
Rural	16,56,139	8,48,831	8,07,308	21	9	716	531	7,57,134	7,21,785	210	156	Nil	Nil.
Urban	67,427	37,609	29,818	12	Nil	90	79	30,750	23,994	248	170	Nil	Nil.

Muslims.		Sikhs.		Zoroastrians.		Other Religions. Tribal.		Indefinite Beliefs.		Religion not stated.	
Males.	Females.	Males.	Females.	Males.	Females.	Males.	Females.	Males.	Females.	Males.	Females.
15	16	17	18	19	20	21	22	23	24	25	26
97,063	90,339	187	54	Nil	Nil	Nil	6	1	Nil	8	3
90,599	84,789	142	29	Nil	Nil	Nil	6	1	Nil	8	3
6,464	5,550	45	25	Nil	Nil	Nil	Nil	Nil	Nil	Nil	Nil.

* The figures have been obtained from the office of the Superintendent of Census Operations, Bihar, Patna.

The main religions followed by the people of the district are induism, Islam and Christianity. There are some tribals who llow nature worship.

Hindus form the largest religious unit and then come the uslims. The religious beliefs of the Hindus and the Muslims have en discussed elsewhere. The number of Hindu temples are very all but a few of them are quite famous. The Ugratara temple at aheshi, the Singheswar temple at Singheshwarasthan are some of em.

The figures of Christians, i.e., 251 in 1951 and 1,416 in 1961 pear to be an under-estimate. The Christians claim that there are re than two thousand Christians in the district out of which the man Catholics predominate. It may be mentioned that the man Catholic Mission was established at Latona near Supaul near out 1821. The Roman Catholic Mission at Latona had branches Dumarea and Garhea villages near Raghopur Railway Station. ghopur Railway Station has now been destroyed by the Kosi. marea and Garhea Roman Catholic Missions are not functioning w. At present there are Roman Catholic Missions and Churches Latona and Khoria. At Latona there is a Missionary school also.

The Protestant Christian Missions have their churches at harsa, Supaul, Madhepura and Bhatania. Saharsa Protestant ssion has been in existence from the early days of the present ntury. There are certain ladies and gentlemen associated with this ssion who have been working in this area now (1963) for more n a quarter of a century. The Protestant Missions maintain a nber of dispensaries, hospitals and primary schools at their centres. e Christian Hospital at Saharsa has recently been shifted to dhepura and has been doing excellent work with a proper medical f. A leper clinic is attached to this hospital There is a Christian ary at Saharsa which is at present the best library in this district.

Bariahi a village about 4 miles from Saharsa township was once entre of Christianity. An European *zamindar* of Bariahi, John ristian was an intimate friend of the Hindu scholar Lakshminath sain of Parsarma who was then living at Bangaon. John Christian l composed a number of *Bhajans* in Hindi which have been orporated in the song book used in the churches. It is also underod that John Christian had composed some poems in Maithili guage. At one time there were quite a number of European ristian families scattered in the district who were excellent gentlen-farmers. Almost all of them have now gone away. A few mants are still at Bhataniya, Dumarea, Jarela and Pratapganj. ere are a few old Christian graves at Saharsa, Latona, Khoria, taniya and Supaul. Latona graveyard has some memorial tablets lier than 1821.

The other minor religious sects are Jains, Brahmos, Buddhists and Sikhs. Though very small in number they form quite distinct groups.

Scheduled Castes, Tribes and Backward Classes.

According to the census of 1951, the number of Scheduled Castes, Scheduled Tribes and Backward Classes were as follows*:—

——	Total.	Males.	Females.	Percentage of the total population.
1. Scheduled Castes ..	2,04,802	1,02,494	1,02,308	15.6
2. Scheduled Tribes ..	28,366	14,997	13,369	2.1
3. Backward Classes ..	2,85,664	1,47,303	1,38,361	21.8

In the census of 1961†, the figures for Backward Classes were not taken into account. The following Tables I and II show the total population of the Scheduled Tribes (castewise figures also) and Scheduled Castes (castewise figures also):—

TABLE I.

——	Name of the tribes.	Total Rural Urban.	Total. Persons.	Males.	Females.
1	2	3	4	5	6
Scheduled Tribes†† ..	..	Total ..	7,605	3,949	3,656
		Rural ..	7,580	3,927	3,653
		Urban ..	25	22	3
	Kharia ..	Rural ..	202	202	Nil.
		Urban ..	Nil	Nil	Nil.
	Kharwar ..	Rural ..	469	238	231
		Urban ..	1	1	1
	Lohara or Lohra	Rural ..	38	22	[illegible]
		Urban ..	Nil	Nil	Nil.
	Mahli ..	Rural ..	2	2	Nil.
		Urban ..	Nil	Nil	Nil.
	Mal Paharia ..	Rural ..	511	200	311
		Urban ..	Nil	Nil	Nil.
	Munda ..	Rural ..	2	Nil	2
		Urban ..	Nil	Nil	Nil.
	Oraon ..	Rural ..	1,031	422	609
		Urban ..	6	3	3
	Santal ..	Rural ..	5,296	2,829	2,467
		Urban ..	15	15	Nil.
	Savar ..	Rural ..	Nil	Nil	Nil.
		Urban ..	1	1	Nil.
	Unclassified ..	Rural ..	29	12	17
		Urban ..	2	2	Nil.

* *District Census Handbook of Saharsa*, 1951, pp. 66—68.

† Office of the Superintendent of Census Operations, Bihar, Patna.

†† Census of India, 1961, Vol. IV, Bihar, p. 507. The figures are clearly wrong when compared to 1951 Census figures without any exp'anation. Supaul subdivision has had a large decline in Santal population as was proved by enquiry in the Census office.

	Name of the caste.	Population. Persons. Total.	Persons. Rural.	Persons. Urban.	Males. Total.	Males. Rural.	Males. Urban.	Females. Total.	Females. Rural.	Females. Urban.
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11
Scheduled Caste	..	2,96,130	2,88,419	7,711	1,48,182	1,44,240	3,942	1,47,948	1,44,179	3,769
	Bantar ..	24,091	24,089	2	11,897	11,895	2	12,194	12,194	Nil.
	Chamar ..	64,667	63,155	1,512	30,772	29,972	800	33,895	33,183	712
	Chaupal ..	650	599	51	325	303	22	325	296	29
	Dabgar ..	498	498	Nil	252	252	Nil	246	246	Nil.
	Dhobi ..	9,520	9,003	512	4,777	4,516	261	4,743	4,492	251
	Dom .	4,533	4,091	442	2,172	1,926	246	2,361	2,165	196
	Dusadh ..	..	54,165	2,432	.	27,643	1,199	..	26,522	1,240
	Halalkhor ..	41	Nil	41	8	Nil	8	33	Nil	33
	Mehtar ..	1,235	805	430	689	476	213	546	329	217
	Kanjar ..	12	Nil	12	6	Nil	6	6	Nil	6
	Kurariar	24	24	Nil	15	15	Nil	9	9	Nil.
	Musahar ..	1,27,027	1,25,020	2,007	64,572	63,549	1,023	62,455	61,471	984
	Nat ..	92	15	77	50	12	38	42	3	39
	Pan or Sawasi .	1	1	Nil	1	1	Nil	Nil	Nil	Nil.
	Pasi ..	2,254	2,026	228	1,141	1,011	130	1,113	1,015	98
	Rajwar .	1	Nil	1	1	Nil	1	Nil	Nil	Nil.
	Turi .	12	12	Nil	10	10	Nil	2	2	Nil.
	Unclassified	4,911	4,911	Nil	2 659	2,659	Nil	2,952	2,952	Nil.

*Office of the Superintendent of Census Operations, Bihar, Patna.

Castes.

There has been no castewise enumeration in the census of 1951. Castes are not extinct from the district. The traditional division of occupations according to the castes has, however, been in the melting pot and untouchability is losing its hold more by social education than by law. In political fights, caste-consciousness takes an ugly shape and becomes aggressive. This has been noticed in both 1957 and 1962 General Elections.

The last castewise enumeration was done in 1931 census. In 1941 census owing to war exigency this along with many other tables were dropped. Castewise figures were deliberately not collected in 1951 census. The 1961 census, however, mentions the names and population of the different Scheduled Tribes and Scheduled Castes. The castewise figures in 1931 census are not quoted as they also contain the figures for Bhagalpur district as a whole including the subdivisions of Bhagalpur Sadar, Banka, Madhepura and Supaul. A brief discussion of some of the principal castes will be of interest to show the particular functional role some of these castes still play.

Brahmans.—Brahmans are scattered all over the district and most of them are Maithils. Practically every village has some Brahmans. Their heavy concentration is in the following villages:—

Gamail, Kishanganj, Laskari, etc., in Kishanganj police-station; Baluabazar, Basantpur, Nirmali, etc., in Pratapganj police-station;

Bangaon, Basauna, Chainpur, Kahra, Kandaha, Mahishi, Murajpur, Parari, Patuaha, Satarwar, Sihaul, etc., in Saharsa police-station;

Balia, Bargaon, Basnahi, Golma, Lagma, etc., in Sonbarsa police-station;

Babhangama, Babhani, Basaha, Chandail, Kamalpur, Karnapur, Kharail, Malhad, Parsarma, Sukhpur, etc., in Supaul police-station.

The Maithil Brahmans still keep up their unique family records for the purpose of arranging marriages. They still merit the pithy description given to them by Ram Chandra when they refused to help him.* The keepers of the records are known as *panjiars* or *panjikars* and they act along with *ghataks* or marriage negotiators. The annual meeting for arranging the marriages is held at Bangaon in Saharsa district just like the one at Saurath village in Darbhanga district. The office of the *panjiars* or

* '*Grihe sura rahne bhitah, paraspara Virohinah*: *Kula bhimanini vuyain maithilvam bhavirashvatha*", i.e., "Heroes at home; cowards in the battle-field; even quarrelling among yourselves and inordinately full of family pride shall you be in Mithila."

panjikars is hereditary but the permission of the Maharaja of Darbhanga is essentially taken before a *panjiar* can begin to function. Since the death of the Maharaja of Darbhanga in 1962, only the *panjiar's* permission is obtained.

The main object aimed at by the maintenance of these genealogical records is the prevention of any marriages within the prohibited degrees of relationship. The institution of the system is attributed to Raja Harsing Deva, last of the *rajas* of Mithila in the 14th century, one of whose ministers is said to have through ignorance, married a lady within the prohibited degree. A detailed description about the *panji* system and the role of the *panjiars* or *panjikars* has been given in the text on People in the re-written *Darbhanga District Gazetteer.*

Traditionally the main professions of the Brahmans originally were priesthood and cultivation. They have now taken to independent professions, service, etc., besides cultivation and business as means of livelihood. A separate class known as *purohit* whose profession has been priesthood is still existing. Most of the Brahmans normally employ ploughmen. The incidence of literacy among them is very high. The Brahmans are very closely knit and have an aristocracy among them even if poor.

Rajputs.—Rajputs are scattered all over the district but heavy concentrations are in the following villages under different police-stations of the district:—

Alamnagar police-station.—Alamnagar, Gangapur. Kapsia, Karma, Madheli, etc.

Saharsa police-station.—Basantpur or Murli Basantpur, Bharauli, Dhabauli, Panchgachhia, etc.

Sonbarsa police-station.—Baratpur, Dhanchhoha, Soha, Sonbarsa Raj, etc.

Supaul police-station.—Barail, Baraunari, Paisarma, Paisauni, etc. Besides there are several other villages like Dehad, Manguwar, Shahpur, etc.

Among the Rajputs, there are a number of sub-castes such as Chandel, Chauhan, Gandhwaria, Rajvanshi, Suryavanshi, Udayvanshi and so on. There are several Rajput families who claim a long aristocratic lineage.

Sonbarsa Raj family traces its origin from Raja Vikramaditya and belongs to the *Agni* branch of Kshatriya. Panchgachhia family also traces its origin from Raja Vikramaditya of Ujjain and belongs to the Gandhwaria clan of Pramara branch of the Rajputs. Alamnagar family belongs to the Chandel dynasty. The Gandhwarias are scattered all over Tirhut and Saharsa and the families of Dhabauli, Parsarma, Sonbarsa, Sukhpur, etc., all belong to it.

Marriages between sub-sects of the Rajputs are now taking place. They are large cultivators and many of them have become lawyers, doctors, contractors, etc. A few of them were big *zamindars*. Now their *zamindaris* have been vested into the State. The Rajputs of Alamnagar, Barail, Baruari, Panchgachhia, Sonbarsa, Sukhpur, etc., had large *zamindaris*. The Rajputs are proud of their lineage and affiliations with the Rajputs of other parts of the country. The incidence of literacy among them is high. The Rajputs of Saharsa district have social and marital relationships with the Rajputs of other States like Uttar Pradesh, Rajasthan, etc.

Bhumihars.—They are scattered all over the district with a heavy concentration at villages Bihra, Sihaul (Saharsa police-station), Bina, Chakla Nirmali, Garaul (Supaul police-station), Kishanganj, Manjhaul (Kishanganj police-station), etc. Some of the Bhumihars are quite rich. Like the Maithil Brahmans or the Rajputs they are also very caste-conscious and have an aristocratic bearing. Cultivation had been their main profession and some of them are large cultivators. Many of them have taken up professions like law, medicine, business, etc. The incidence of literacy is high.

Kayasthas.—Kayasthas in this district also normally go in for schooling and for generations they have been in the leading professions. There are only a few Kayasthas who actually till the field by themselves. Most of them would normally employ ploughmen. Among the Kayasthas there are sub-sects like Ambashta, Bhatnagar, Karna, Mathur, Nigam, Saxena, Srivastava, etc. The majority of the Kayasthas of the district belong to the Karna sub sect. They are scattered all over the district with a heavy concentration in the following villages:—

Rajni Babhangama (Murliganj police-station), Paruhar, Patori, Saharsa (Saharsa police-station), Bargaon in Sonbarsa police-station, Bansbitti, Chak Dumaria, Jagatpur, Pipra, Radattpatti, Supaul under Supaul police-station and so on. In Saharsa town there is a separate *mohalla* of Kayasthas popularly known as Kayastha *Toli* where the Kayasthas are concentrated.

These Karna Kayasthas also have the *panjiars* like the Maithil Brahmans. They work along with the *ghataks* or brokers in the marriages of the Kayasthas. The incidence of literacy among them is very high.

The number of Rarhy Kayasthas is very small in the district. They have practically no connection with their original districts of Bankura, Birbhum, Burdwan, Hoogly, Murshidabad in West Bengal. This particular sub-sect has had an exhaustive treatment in the re-written *District Gazetteer of Bhagalpur.*

Banias.—Banias of different sects and sub-sects are to be found in the district, viz., Kalwar, Kasera, Kasodan, Kesarbani, Lohar, Rauniyar Vaisya, Sonar, Suri, Teli, Thathera, Vaisya.

They are scattered all over the district but their heavy concentration is in the following places:—

Purainibazar in Alamnagar police-station, Basmatia, Birpur, Simrahi in Birpur P.-S., Arar, Kishanganj in Kishanganj police-station, Maheshpur, Siripur in Kishanpur police-station, Gamharia in Madhepura police-station, Murliganj town in Murliganj police-station, Kunaulibazar in Nirmali police-station, Karjainbazar, Maheshpur, Raghopur in Pratapganj police-station, Daulatpur in Rampur police-station, Bariahi, Saharsa town in Saharsa police-station, Sahuria in Saurbazar police-station, Laukaha, Latraha, Manoharpatti, Thumha, Tulapatti in Supaul police-station, etc. A few other places where they are concentrated are Bihariganj, Mehishi, Murajpur, Nauhatta, Harahi, etc.

The Banias are generally cultivators and businessmen carrying all kinds of trade. Kalwars of the district are cultivators, businessmen in *kirana*, cloth, hardware, utensils, jewellery, etc., and they are the most cultured sub-sect among the Banias. Kaseras and Thatheras are braziers. They sell utensils of different kinds either by holding shops in the towns or big villages or by hawking. Kasodans generally deal in hardware business. A few of them are quite good cultivators also. Kesarbanis, Suris and Telis mostly deal in oil, grocery, etc., and a few of them are cultivators. Sonars are goldsmiths while the Lohars are ironsmiths.

Koeris and Kurmis.—The Koeris and Kurmis are essentially cultivators, industrious and hardworking. They are evenly distributed all over the district. In the uplands of towns like Birpur, Madhepura, Murliganj, Nirmali, Saharsa and Supaul they grow vegetables for the neighbouring markets. The Kurmis are more educated and some of them have taken to other professions like law, services, business, etc.

Ahirs or Yadavas (*Goalas*). Numerically they form the strongest of the single caste-unit and are scattered all over the district. They are mostly to be found on the banks of the river Kosi in villages Kusaha, Muraut, Raipur, Ratwara in Alamnagar police-station bordering Bhagalpur district; Baitia (near Kosi embankment 1½ miles north-west of Supaul), Balba, Dumarea (on Kosi embankment 3 miles west and north of Supaul). The following villages and towns of the district have also a heavy concentration of Yadavas:—

Chatra, Madhepura town, Murho, Sahugarh in Madhepura police-station, Bishanpur, Ranipatti in Murliganj police-station, Arar Bishanpur, Bijalpur, Gangjala, Padampur in Saharsa police-station, etc.

Most of them are cultivators or follows pastoral occupations, rearing cattle and dealing in milk and milk-products.

They are divided into four sub-castes, Goria, Kanaujia, Kishnaut and Majraut. The Kishnauts claim precedence over others on the tradition that Lord Krishna was born in this sub-caste. The incidence of literacy is quite high. Many of them have taken to professions. Caste-consciousness is being utilised for organisation on purely caste-basis for political purposes. Elections have been fought more on caste-lines. The results in the General Election of 1962 show that Yadavas belonging to different political parties have come out successful from many constituencies.

The last *District Gazetteer of Bhagalpur*, mentions* that the Yadavas have a special caste godling named Bisu Raut who was cut to pieces by a Gourhi sorcerer (taking the form of a tiger) because milk was refused to him. His chief shrine is on the banks of the river Gogri which is occasionally visited by the Yadavas of the district.

Besides they have another glorified hero Lurik whose adventures are preserved in a number of ballads. They also worship a deity named as *Karu Maharaj*. There is one Karusthan four miles south of Maheshi. It is believed that Karu was a great saint and the diseases of the cattle can be cured by his worship. They (Yadavas) generally offer milk to this shrine and milk is offered daily there.

Banpars.—They are notified Backward Classes under the Constitution. This caste is evenly distributed all over the district. They are popularly known as Gorhis in the district. Their main occupation is fishing and cultivation. The incidence of literacy among them is very poor.

Barhis.—This community is evenly distributed all over the district. By profession they are artisans and they generally make agricultural implements for the villagers. In the urban areas they make furniture, doors, windows, etc. The incidence of literacy among them is poor.

Dhanuks and Kahars.—Both belong to the Backward Classes under the Constitution. Generally they join domestic services and are employed as servants. They used to work as palanquin bearers when palanquins were in use.

In towns they pull rickshaws, or are employed as drivers or peons in offices. They are now getting allergic to domestic chores.

Dhobis.—Dhobis are notified Scheduled Castes under the Constitution. They are mostly scattered in the rural areas of the district. Almost every village has got some Dhobis who mostly work as washer-men.

In the towns they have opened laundries. Besides wage earners some of them are also agriculturists. They have a strong caste-*panchayat*.

*District Gazetteer of Bhagalpur, 1911, p. 48.

Doms.—They are included in the Scheduled Castes under the Constitution. Their total population during 1961 census was 4,533 (4,091 in rural and 442 in urban areas). They rear pigs, make bamboo wares and work as labourers. They are much addicted to liquor but the incidence is going down. Some of them have started studying in schools.

Dusadhs.—They are notified Scheduled Castes under the Constitution and according to the census of 1961 their total population was 56,597 (54,165 rural and 2,432 urban). They are scattered throughout the district. They are one of the most useful castes in the district, owing to their value as agricultural labourers. In Bhagalpur and some other districts of South Bihar the Dusadhs are practically leaving their profession of pig rearing and have confined themselves to cattle rearing only. But the Dusadhs of this district rear both cattle, pigs, poultry, etc. A few of them are quite well-to-do and own landed property also; a few who are educated have taken to teaching professions in the Primary schools. They have monopolised the post of village *chowkidars* or village watchmen in the district. The women supplement the income of the family by working as labourers. The incidence of literacy among them is poor.

Hajams or Napits.—They are now included in the Constitution under Backward Classes and are also known as Nai and Thakur. They are scattered throughout the district. Their chief profession is shaving and hair-cutting but some are also good cultivators and rear cattle. They used to play a more important role earlier for negotiating marriages among the Hindus and at the actual marriages. Their role during the birth and death of a man is still important. In some of the villages Hajams still practise a rude form of unscientific surgery. Several of them now work in hair-cutting saloons.

Kewats and Mallahas.—They belong to Backward Classes under the Constitution. Boating, fishing and agriculture are their occupations. The incidence of literacy among them is very low.

Kumhars.—In almost all the villages and towns some men of this caste are found They are originally potters and prepare earthenwares, tiles, etc. Some of them are also good cultivators. The incidence of literacy among them is very low.

Musahars.—They are notified Scheduled Castes under the Constitution. They are numerically very strong among the Scheduled Castes. Essentially most of them are without lands and lead a precarious existence as labourers. They keep pigs hens and cocks.

Rabidasas.—Usually called Chamars they are by occupation makers of footwear, cultivators or labourers. They are a notified Scheduled Caste. In some villages they have the right to collect the hides of the dead livestock. The services of the women-folk, *Chamain*, are frequently requisitioned as midwife although they are

untrained and follow crude methods. Many of them are getting employment in the public services. Hard-working and simple minded, they are now quite progressive in spite of poor incidence of literacy. Their total population in the district is 64,667 souls. They are scattered throughout the district.

The Bantar.—The early history and origin of this caste has not been noticed in detail anywhere so far. A special investigation was made about them.

It is commonly believed that the Bantars originally belonged to Nepal from where they came to Bihar in search of better condition of life. But their facial features do not bear resemblance with those of the Nepalese. In this State they are scattered in Darbhanga, Purnea and Saharsa districts.

In Saharsa they are mainly found in Tribeniganj, Singheshwar, Murliganj, Pipra, Raghopur, Birpur, Nirmali and Udakishanganj *anchals*. They form a small percentage of the total population of the district. The accurate population figures are not available. Their title is *'Sardar'* and they are divided into different sects, namely, *Manjhi, Jamini, Rout, Rup, Pajha, Banth, Hajra, Das* and *Sadewal*. Except *Manjhi*, they cannot marry in their own sect. They speak a distorted dialect of Hindi language with mixture of Maithil words.

Education.—Educationally they are very backward. It is gathered that till now (1963) not even one Bantar has graduated and there are just a handful of matriculates. Their economic backwardness stands on the way. The exact incidence of literacy is not known but is believed to be extremely low.

Economic condition.—The main occupation of this caste is cultivation but the majority of the population do not own any land and they are simply *bataidars*, i.e., they get only half of the share of produce from the cultivation on others' land. An investigation into Daparkha village regarding their economic conditions shows their extremely poor economic condition. Their diet consists of the cheaper grains such as maize, *marua, kheri, china,* etc., which are not wholesome for health. The male dress consists of only one *bhagwa* (loin-cloth) as we find in case of the Santals or other tribals. But now the younger generation has started wearing shirt and *pyjamas*, etc. The female folk wears *sari* and blouse. They are very poorly clad. The probable reason is their poor economic condition which does not permit them to spend more on clothes.

Manners and Customs—Birth.—During pregnancy a woman is not allowed to perform any religious rituals or rites as she is supposed to be impure during this period. She becomes eligible for performing such rites in most cases after 21 days of giving birth to a child. After the birth of a child an *Ojha* (Brahmin) is called

for and he fixes the day for *Chhati* which generally falls on the sixth day of the birth of the child. The *Chhati* ceremony is performed by the women and is in common with the other castes.

Marriage.—The average age for the marriage is about 12 for the boys and 10 for the girls. Child marriage is prevalent among them and even at present (1963) there is no sign to show downward tendency. The statutory laws prohibiting child marriage have had no effect on the people of this caste.

There is no high demand of dowry as we find in the case of other high castes such as Brahmin, Rajput, Kayastha and also in some low castes such as Baniya, Suri, Teli, etc. Even in the tribals particularly among the Santals a sum of Rs. 15 to Rs. 25 is given as *pan* (dowry). But in this caste only one rupee, as a matter of custom, is taken as *tilak* or dowry. However, the father of the girl has to pay the price of the offers (mainly consisting of clothes and ornaments for the bride) presented by the father of the boy. But the payment is not rigid. It depends, to a great extent, on the paying capacity of the father of the girl.

Usually sometime after marriage a ceremony known as *Duraga-man* is performed and the girl is taken to the husband's house. *Duragaman* ceremony also does not involve any heavy expenditure.

There is a very peculiar marriage custom among the Bantars. Three times a fire is required to be lit by rubbing two pieces of wood and if there is no fire in all the three attempts, the marriage is bound to be cancelled. This is still followed very rigidly.

Marriages are not performed by a Brahmin priest. Among the Bantars the *Bhagina* or nephew (sister's son) does the work of the Brahmin priest. The Brahmin only fixes the auspicious day for the marriage. The marriage *mantras* are in a distorted form of Maithili. Divorce is not permitted; but widow marriage is in vogue. The younger brother can marry the widow of the elder brother but not *vice versa*. Polygamy is allowed but generally monogamy is preferred. The son is only entitled to inherit the ancestral property which is divided into equal shares on the basis of the number of brothers.

Family.—The joint family system is still prevailing, but partition sometimes takes place when differences develop among daughter-in-laws or with mother-in-law.

Death.—The dead bodies of the old persons are cremated whereas those of the children and young persons are thrown in the river. After four days of death a custom known as *'Hor Chanche'* is performed when the people are given food prepared without oil. On the 11th day the hair is shaved and nails clipped. On the 12th day *Sradh* is performed. In place of Brahmins, *Sadhus* are fed on this occasion and all funeral rites and *Sradh* are conducted by the *Bhagina*.

Festivals.—All the festivals such as *Durga Puja, Kali Puja, Diwali, Krishnasthmi* prevalent in the other caste are also observed by this caste.

Indigenous Godlings.—They also worship Hindu gods and goddesses. They sometimes hold *Puja* of Satya Narain Bhagwan but the *Puja* is conducted by the *Bhagina* (nephew). *Katha* (story) and *mantras* are in Maithili and not in Sanskrit.

In addition to the Hindu gods and goddesses they also worship some other gods and goddesses. They worship Genr Singh who is supposed to be the original ancestor of this caste. Genr Singh is worshipped twice in the year—once in the month of *Magh* (in January) on the eve of *Tilasankrant* and again in *Ashadh* (in July). She-goats having no kids, he-goats and pigeons are offered on the altar of Genr Singh which is generally found under a *Pipal* tree in the village. The other ancestral god is Salesh Mahraj who is supposed to be a friend of Genr Singh. Salesh Mahraj is remembered particularly when some one has to face a tiger or other wild animals in the jungle or somewhere. With the object of averting the impending danger to life Ganja, she-goat and he goat are promised to be offered to Salesh Mahraj. Ganja is offered to both Genr Singh and Salesh Mahraj and also to Panchu Nath and Champawati but it is not smoked by the people. Pig is offered to Genr Singh but now this practice is on the wane.

Among goddesses they worship Champawati, Ukeshwari and Sitala. The last goddess is in common with the Hindus and the other two are mainly associated with this caste. Ukeshwari is supposed to control epidemics such as pox, cholera, etc. She is offered she-goats, he-goats, pigeons and hens. A hen, after going through ceremonial bath and *Tulsi* and *Achhat* having been offered to it, is driven away from the village. Before the hen is driven away, the following *mantras* are read by the *Bhagat* who is appointed to worship all gods and goddesses:—

उत्तर वीधनी कल परवेश, डग्ला चढ़ उकेश्वरी एल
टाल-टाल मैया उकेश्वरी, उत्तर से दक्षिण के टार
पूरब से पश्चिम के टार, सीमा से बाहर के टार
जा लग न हम धराबिश्रो, ता लग न धुरियो
दुहाय मैया उकेश्वरी के

The *mantras* appeal to *Ukeshwari* for driving out all the troubles and evils of the village.

In case of disease or supposed attack of evil spirits the *Bhagat* like *Ojha* or *Gyan Guru* of the tribals specially of the Santals, is approached. There is a difference between the *Ojha* of the tribals and the *Bhagat* of this caste. The *Ojha* knows some medicinal herbs to cure the disease but the *Bhagat* does not know the same.

He simply feels the pulse and if it is beating regularly, he comes to the conclusion that the person is suffering from some disease for which he asks the man to consult some doctor. But if the pulse beats irregularly or after a short interval, the person is said to have been possessed by some evil spirits and the *Bhagat* tries to make him free from the influence of the spirits by reciting some *mantras*, etc. One of the ways to find out whether the person has become free from such influence is to throw a *thali* (dish) while reciting some *mantras* on the back of the person and if it sticks there, the man is thought to be still under the influence of the evil spirits but if it falls down, the conclusion is that the person has got rid of such evil spirits. They believe in evil spirits, and assign the causes of disease to such spirits. Their appearance and dress also resemble to some extent that of the Santals. The striking difference is that the Bantars speak Maithili whereas the Santals have their own language. But it may be pointed out that in the village Sahpur Santali of this district the Santals were found speaking Hindi and they have nearly forgotten their own language. The other striking difference is that the tribals are addicted to country liquor locally called *Handia* (rice brewed liquor) but the Bantars do not take any kind of intoxication.

Indigenous Mode of Administration of Justice.—Every village has a headman called as *Sardar*. Every *Sardar* has a *Salhatia* to help him in discharging his duties connected with the administration of justice. Both of them work without any remuneration for their work. The post of the *Sardar* is hereditary while *Salhatia* is appointed by the *Sardar*. Any difference or dispute is first brought to the notice of the *Sardar* and if the party is not satisfied with the decision of the *Sardar*, he has the right to appeal to the neighbouring *Sardars*. If their verdict also fails to satisfy the party, the matter may be reported to the *Maijan*. The head of a number of *Sardars* (from 5 to 10) is called *Maijan*. His post is also hereditary. A *Diwan* who also inherits his post helps the *Maijan*. Both of them work honorarily. A sepoy is also appointed to help them. He is paid out of the contributions collected by the *Sardars* for this purpose.

The areas of Darbhanga, Saharsa, Purnea and Nepal where this caste is found are divided into 13 *parganas* and each *pargana* has a *Maijan*. In Saharsa district there are five *Maijans*. All the 13 *Maijans* elect a *Sabhapati* among themselves whose decision is considered to be final and binding on the parties concerned. He is the last authority like our Supreme Court to deal with justice. The cost of travelling, etc., of the *Maijans* or *Sabhapati* is borne by the aggrieved party who calls them. *Sabhapati* is helped by a *Mantri* who is also elected by the *Maijans*. Both the *Sabhapati* and the *Mantri* hold honorary posts. It may be mentioned that the indigenous system of administration of justice still continues to some extent in spite of *Gram Panchayats* and *Gram Kutcheries*.

SCHEDULED TRIBES.

Among the Scheduled Tribes, there are Santals, Oraons, Kharwars, Paharias, Kharias and a sprinkling of other tribes.

The following are the tribal villages under different police-stations:—

Murliganj police-station.—Arar, Baghinia, Dinapatti, Gamharia, Haripur, Tinkonma, Joregama, Kathautia, Pokhram, Rajni, Rampur, Ranipatti and Sheikhpura;

Saharsa police-station.—Bela and Purikh;

Sonbarsa police-station.—Balia, Basnahi and Raghunathpur;

Supaul police-station.—Karnapur and Sunderpur. Besides Chhatapur *Anchal* and Kumarkhand *Anchal,* Nauda and Parsagarhi in Tribeniganj police-station.*

These Scheduled Tribes are hardworking and have taken to various professions like cultivation, fishing, hunting, etc. Among the Santals there are both Christians and followers of tribal religion. Paharias and Mal Paharias appear to have migrated either from Santal Parganas or Bhagalpur district. The incidence of literacy is not so high but attempts are being made to educate them. Stipends are being given to them by the Welfare Department.

MUSLIMS.

Muslims are scattered all over the district but a good number of them are found in the following villages:—

Bhelahi, Dighia, Fekrahi, Islampur, Jalai, Jhamta, Mahishi, Manjhaul, Mirtoli (Saharsa town), Nakuch Gamraho, Nauhatta, Rajhampur, Ramauti, Saharsa, Shahpur, Subindabad, etc.

Among them we find Mughals, Pathans, Sayyeds, Sheikhs and others. Besides these the following sections are also found in the district:—Ansari (weaver), Bakho (nomads), Darzee (tailor), Dhobi (washerman), Dhuniya (cotton-carder), Fakir (beggar), Kajaratia (wrestlers), Kasai (butcher), Momin (weaver), Nalband (farrier), Pamaria (singer), Rangrez (dyers) and several others.

Most of them besides following their caste-occupations have cultivation or other professions.

RELIGIOUS BELIEFS.

The people of the district are mostly Hindus but the Muslims form an important minority. There were no Buddhists during 1951 census but the census of 1961 shows 42 Buddhists (33 males and 9 females) all over the district. They are recent migrants and their number is negligible.

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* According to 1961 Census there has been a very big decline of the tribal population in Supaul subdivision. The matter is under investigation of the Census Department. Unless adequately explained the fall is not indicated according to the District authorities (P. C. R. C.)

The 1961 census also gives the figure of Jains as 784 (males 458 and females 326) against 96 (males 54 and females 42) in 1951. They are recent migrants for business purposes as it is well known that most of the Jains are Marwaris and as this small community has the capacity of extending their occupation and usually invite their brethren from other parts. The Christians 251 (males 149 and females 102) in 1951 and 1,416 in 1961 appear to be an under-estimate and their number is not less than 2,000 in the whole of Saharsa district as mentioned earlier. Though they are small in number they form a distinct and advanced group. The Sikhs (241) in 1961 census form another progressive group. Besides these there are members of smaller creeds like Arya Samaj, Anandmarg, etc., but their activities are not prominent in the district. So far the Kabir-panthis are concerned they have been discussed elsewhere.

Religious beliefs of the Hindus.

The religious beliefs of the Hindus described in *District Gazetteer of Bhagalpur or Darbhanga* could be repeated for this district as well Basically they are the same practically all over Bihar.

It would not, however, be out of place to mention about the *Tantrik Upasana* which is still prevalent in the district.

Saharsa is a part of Mithila and so the beliefs which are prevalent in Maithil community are also prevalent in the district. *Shakti* cult had great hold among many of the advanced Brahmans, Rajputs, Kayasthas, etc., of the district. It is said that the Maharaja of Sonbarsa and *zamindars* of Baruari, Panchgachhia, Baraipur, etc., were followers of the *Tantrik* cult.

There are two main branches of *Tantrik Sadhana*, *Dakshinachar* and *Bamachar*. A follower of *Tantrik* cult firstly follows the branch of *Dakshinachar* and when he achieves a certain amount of success after performing certain rites, he is allowed to perform the rites of *Bamachar*.

The *Dantamala* and the *Khappar* (skull of a dead-man) are still in existence at Sonbarsa with the help of which the *puja* used to be performed. In *Tantropasana* there is tradition of ten *Mahavidyas*, viz., (1) Kalitara, (2) Mahavidya, (3) Shorishi, (4) Bhubneshwari, (5) Bhairavi, (6) Chhinnamasta, (7) Dhumawati, (8) Bagalamukhi or Bagala, (9) Matangi and (10) Kamala

For each of these ten *Mahavidyas*, there are separate methods of *upasana*. There are several places in the district of Saharsa, where there are temples of *Shakti Sadhana*. There is a temple of Ugra Tara Devi at Maheshi where during the ten days of Dasahara and at the time of Kali *Puja*, people congregate from different parts of India. The place is considered as one of the 24 "*Upa pithas*" of Devi Bhagawati. At Panchgachhia also there is one temple of Rama

Thakur. There is also one image of the Goddess Kali. There is temple of the ten *Mahavidyas* at Patori also. A temple of the same kind is at Barail. *Shakti* is commonly worshipped even in the incarnation of village Goddess (*Gramdevi* or *Devata*) throughout the district. There have been both *Grihastha tantriks* and *Sanyasi tantriks* those that lead a household life and follow the cult and those that are ascetic-*tantriks*. Some of the well-known *tantriks* were Lakshminath Gosain, Raja Rudra Narayan Singh, Lall Mishra, etc. There are still quite a few living well-known *tantriks*.

Kabirpanthis or followers of Kabir, a medieval saint of love and amity are to be found in a large number of villages such as Kusaha, Muraut, Bolba, Chatra, Madhepura, Murho, Sahugarh, etc., where Yadavas are heavily concentrated.

Sur and Tulsidas, both Brahman saints have also profoundly influenced the more educated classes. The *Padas* of Surdasa and *Ram Charitra Manas* of Tulsidasa are treated as sacred literature.

In the 15th century Vidyapati, who graced the court of the Maharaja of Sugauna (Darbhanga) was the most celebrated poet of Maithil area. As a writer of Sanskrit works he was an author of considerable repute, but it is his dainty lyrics and religious songs in the vernacular that have made him immortal. His short religious poems, dealing principally with Radha and Krishna, exercised an important influence on the religious history of Eastern India. His songs had largely influenced Chaitanya Deva of Bengal who flourished at the beginning of the 16th century. Vidyapati had widely influenced Chandidas the immortal poet of love of Bengal.

During the latter half of the 19th century the popularity of *Rama Charita Manas* in Mithila inspired the Maithil Brahman poet Channa or Chanda Jha (the court poet of Maharaja Lakshmishwar Singh of Darbhanga Raj) to write his *Ramayana* in the Maithili language. Channa's *Ramayana* is very popular in the Maithil areas including Saharsa district. Later the great works in *Braj Bhasha* and Maithili languages, of the great saint late Lakshminath Gosain of village Parsarma, have great influence over the people of Saharsa district. Lall Dasa's *Ramayana* is also as good as that of Channa's.

Religious beliefs of the Muslims.

Muslim religious beliefs have been discussed in some of the revised District Gazetteers. They hold good for this district as well.

NEW CREEDS.

A Hindu creed known as *Anandmarg* has spread in this district since 1958 and has branches in Saharsa, Madhepura, Supaul, Ararahar and Mahua. The cardinal principle of this sect is universal brotherhood. Devotion to *Nirguna Brahma* through

Ashtanga Yoga (*Yama, Niyama, Assanna, Pranyama, Pratihara, Dhyan, Dharan* and *Samadhi*) is practised. There are about 500 followers in the whole district including both sexes. Women can be members of *Anandmarg* society only if their husbands have become the member of the organisation. Generally members congregate in different branches (*Ashramas*) of the *Anandmarg* on Sundays and Tuesdays. There are some followers of Brahmoism in Madhepura.

MANNERS AND CUSTOMS.

There is nothing particularly different in manners and customs of the Hindus and Muslims from those in Darbhanga or Bhagalpur which have been discussed in the revised *Darbhanga or Bhagalpur Gazetteers*.

Inter-caste relations have been discussed at some length in the rewritten *District Gazetteer for Bhagalpur* Saharsa was a part of Bhagalpur district till only 1954. The same pattern of inter-caste relations as discussed in *Bhagalpur Gazetteer* is also seen in Saharsa district.

PROPERTY AND INHERITANCE.

The laws for inheritance and property for the different communities are the same as in the other districts of Bihar. They have been discussed in the other revised *District Gazetteers*.

The Hindus are governed by the Hindu Law in the matters of inheritance and Mohammadans by Mohammadan law. The property of a Hindu is never held in abeyance. It is the general principle of the Hindu Law that property devolves on the sons on the death of the father. According to Manu, the great law giver, "to the nearest *Sapinda* the inheritance next belongs". A Hindu accrues his right in the ancestral property as soon he is conceived but such right cannot be accrued in the separate property of his father. There are two schools of Hindu Law, *Dayabhaga* and *Mitakshara* which govern different sections of the Hindus.

The Hindu Women's Rights to Property Act (XVIII) of 1937 (amended by XI of 1938) has introduced important changes in the law of succession. This provided the widows to have equal shares along with the sons and dead son's wife also had the same right in case of separate property. Further, in the case of a *Mitakshara* joint family the widow takes the place of her husband.

The position of women in this district along with the women elsewhere has substantially changed since the passing of the Hindu Marriage Act, 1956, and Hindu Succession Act, 1956, and the daughters get a share in her father's property just as the son, provided the father does not debar the daughters legally. So far

Mohammadans are concerned the father has the absolute right in the property and can debar any of the sons from inheritance. Among the Mohammadans the daughter has good claim in her father's property as the son and there is a fixed ratio of the rights of son and daughter and the other relatives.

FAMILY LIFE, MARRIAGE AND MORALS.

The description given in the revised *District Gazetteer of Monghyr, Bhagalpur, Purnea or Darbhanga* holds equally good in the case of this district also. Civil contracts of marriage through registration or divorce have not yet become common. Inter-caste marriage is not encouraged but with the present trends of co-education, a comparative freedom to the girls for choosing their career, such marriages have started taking place. The father's position as the patriarch of the family is no longer the rule. Joint family system is in the melting. The village life is being disintegrated and the shift for the educated and the moneyed classes is towards the urban areas.

Saharsa is still backward in girls' education. There are less than 100 girl students in the Girls' High School at Saharsa. There are very few girls' middle schools as the feeders to the higher education for the girls. As long as the education for the girls will not advance, the traditional orthodox pattern of family life will continue to some extent. Cinemas, opening up of communications, co-education in the schools and colleges, activities of the missionaries and the Block Development Officers to bring in economic changes have affected family life to some extent.

GAMBLING.

Gambling and drunkenness usually go together. The district is comparatively free from them.

PROSTITUTION AND TRAFFIC IN WOMEN.

The incidence of prostitution is low. The district has practically no industries and the usual vices of industrialisation. There are a few brothel houses at Supaul, Saharsa, Madhepura and Murliganj towns. Prostitutes in the villages are unknown. The suppression of Immoral Traffic in Girls and Women Act was passed by the Central Government in the year 1956. It was enforced in Saharsa district in April, 1959. Since the enforcement of this Act open prostitution has been curbed. Surprise raids have been organised from time to time.

HOUSING.

The houses or hamlets in the rural areas are lightly built structures with mud-walls, reeds and straw thatches. Kosi ravages made substantial structures useless. The house of a well-to-do man in the villages consists of an open space in the front, cow-shed, an

inner apartment for the ladies and an outer apartment to be used by the male members and guests. The houses in the urban areas are being built with cement, bricks and mortar with concrete roofs or asbestos roofings. Birpur, Bathnaha and the recent growth in the towns have planned houses but within limits. The cinema house in Saharsa is a flimsy godown-like structure with light roofing. Lavatories are attached to very few houses in the rural areas. The housing in the urban areas also do not have always proper lavatories.

The houses in the villages in the district are usually clustered together and apart from the cultivation land. A small piece of homstead land is to be seen in most of the houses in the villages. Villages have not grown haphazardly as the towns have. A village usually has different *muhallas* or *tolas* based on caste-occupations. But this is no longer rigid.

FURNITURE AND DECORATIONS.

There is nothing particular to mention excepting that the discussion in *Darbhanga or Bhagalpur District Gazetteer* applies to Saharsa district as well. The people, particularly the well-to-do section both in the urban and rural areas are becoming more furniture minded. In a Kosi ravaged district there cannot be much of love for decorations. The towns will give the cue after some years when the economy has stabilised.

DRESS AND ORNAMENTS.

There is nothing particularly different in dress and ornaments among the people in this district than those in Darbhanga district. The discussions in *Darbhanga Gazetteer* will apply to this district as well.

FOOD AND DRINK.

The itinerary of food and drink are almost the same as in Darbhanga which have been dealt with in *Darbhanga Gazetteer*. Milk and milk-products like curd, butter, *ghee*, etc., and sweets have their hold on the people here. People do not consume *pan* (betels) as largely as in Darbhanga district. The Maithils are very fond of betel-nuts.

AMUSEMENTS AND GAMES.

Songs and music have a great hold on the people. *Bhajans* and *Kirtans* are very popular. Particular types of songs in particular seasons, are common. The rural folk are very much *mela* minded as these *melas* provide a number of amusement centres such as *nautanki*, theatres, *jatras*, circus, and cinema shows. During Durga Puja or Deepawali variety entertainment programmes are organised at Saharsa, Supaul, Madhepura, Birpur, Bangaon, Panchgachhia, etc. Card games are very popular among all strata of society.

Indigenous games which call for manual exertion and skill are popular in the rural areas. *Kabaddi* is the most favourite game in the rural areas. Games like football, volley-ball, badminton, etc., are becoming popular. The District Sports Association, Saharsa, runs a football shield tournament. Indoor games like playing of cards, dice, carom, chess, etc., are widely indulged in both in the villages and in the towns. The clubs at Saharsa, Madhepura, Birpur, Supaul, Bangaon, etc., have facilities for indoor games.

Music has received patronage from several rich families. Shri Lakshmi Narayan Singh of Panchagachhia sponsored a school of music. Panchgachhia has produced several musicians of high order like Mangan, Raghu Jha, Brahma Narayan and Chandra Sekhar Khan.

Dancing has been preserved and developed by some of the castes that are not high in the social hierarchy. Some of the noted recent dancers are Motia of Karnapur, Santa of Parsarma, Faturi, Krishn Nayak, a shoe maker of Bangaon, etc.

Among indigenous dances mention may be made of *"Jata-Jatin"* by the female-folk in the month of *Aswin* and *Kartik*, *"Pamaria"* and *"Jogira"* dances. *"Jogira"* dances are held during the Holi festival. Some of the tribal folks have their own indigenous dances which they have preserved.

FESTIVALS.

Religious festivals are observed with pomp. Janmashtami, Shivaratri, Ramanavami, Tij, Durga Puja, Deepawali, Navan, Basant Panchmi are some of the festivals of the Hindus. Shabebarat, Ramjan, Id, Bakrid, Fateh-dua-dahum and Muharram are the important festivals of the Muslims. Christmas and Easter are observed by the Christians.

PILGRIM CENTRES.

Hindu temples.

Hari Mandirs are common in the district and important ones are found at the following places which have thereby become pilgrim centres for the Hindus:—

Amarpur, Bangaon, Basauna, Bihra, Chainpur, Debandar, Debana, Garhia, Jalsima, Kahra, Murho, Murli. Nakuch. Panchgachhia, Parari, Saharsa, Singheshwar, Sihaul, Sonbarsa, Supaul and several other places. Among all these the Shiva temple at Singheshwarsthan near Madhepura is most famous and traces its origin from the days of Shringi Rishi of *Treta Yuga*. This temple is devoted to Lord Shiva. Lakhs of visitors worship the deity during Shivaratri. *Debi Mandirs* are at Bangaon, Baraipur, Chainpur, Debana, Dorama, Maheshi, Nayagaon, Panchgachhia and several others. The temple of Ugra Tara Devi at Maheshi has a

historical background. It was near the site of the temple that Jagatguru Shankaracharya lost to Bharati, the wife of Mandan Mishra in a philosophical discussion.* The *Chandisthan* at Panchagachhia and Baratpur are also important pilgrim centres.

The *Surya Mandir* of Kandaha near Maheshi is also very old. Temple for the worship of Sun-God is rather rare. Details will be found elsewhere.

A *Ganesh Mandir* of Bhira Bazar was built by Mansaram Khan, a *zamindar* of Bangaon. Khan is a common title for Brahmans. In the *Hanuman Mandirs* invariably with Sita and Ram are scattered all over the district. The Hanuman temples at Bangaon, Saharsa and Singheshwar attract a large number of visitors.

The Bareshwar temple at Devana is also known as Baneshwar and is connected with Banasur.

Besides these there are several *pindas* and *gawhars* such as Solhesh, Bisu Raut, Karu Khirhari, Sri Lall Thakur and Bisahari. Of all these Karu Khirhari of Mahpur and Bisahari of Bebari are very prominent. In *Sravana Purnima* time these two places are visited by a large number of village folks of the lower classes.

Mosques.

Besides the *Jama Masjids*, mosques are found at villages Aura, Bariahi, Chadipatti, Jhara, Madhepura, Mahua, Parsa, Saharsa, Supaul, etc. There are several *Idgahs* scattered here and there in the district.

MELAS.

The following are the main *melas* or fairs of the district:—

Name of the melas.	Number of visitors.	Occasion.	Duration.
Bangaon ..	About one lakh ..	Krishnastami ..	During the month of Bhadra for two days only.
Bihra .	About one lakh ..	Kartik Purnima ..	During the month of Kartik for two days only.
Kishanpur ..	About fifty thousand.	Gopastami .	For one week
Muhaddipur ..	About fifty thousand.	Basant Panchmi ..	Few days.
Rauta	About two lakhs ..	Baisakh Krishna Paksha.	For a week.
Singheshwarsthan ..	About five lakhs .	Shivaratri ..	From Shivaratri to Phalgun Purnima.
Supaul Rashtriya ..	About one lakh ..	Republic Day ..	From 26th January to 11th February.
Tribeniganj ..	About three lakhs	Ramnavami ..	For fifteen days.

* Ugratara also known as Mahachina is a later Buddhist deity imported from China through Tibet. A fuller description is given in the text on Maheshi (Places of Interest).

ECONOMIC AND PROFESSIONAL GROUP AND CLASSES IN RELATION TO SOCIAL LIFE.

There is nothing particularly different with regard to this sub-section, among the people in this district from those of Bhagalpur district which has had an exhaustive treatment in the re-written *Bhagalpur Gazetteer*. The text on Economic Trends may also be seen.

IMPACT OF KOSI FLOODS ON SOME OF THE VILLAGES IN SAHARSA DISTRICT.

Kosi river rules the economy of the district. The Kosi floods have dominated the life of the people of Saharsa.

With a view to studying the impact of the river Kosi on the socio-economic conditions of the rural areas of Saharsa district an investigation was conducted at six villages, viz., Sahpur Santhali, Jhanjhri, Pratapganj Tola, Tintolia, Niz Daparkha and Barjuri. The selection of the villages was meant to cover some of the worst affected villages of Pratapganj and Tribeniganj police-stations of Supaul sub-division and Kishanganj police-station of Madhepura subdivision. Sahpur Santhali and Jhanjhri are in Kishanganj police-station whereas Pratapganj Tola and Tintolia are in Pratapganj police-station. Niz Daparkha and Barjuri Tola are under Tribeniganj police-station. Two villages namely, Sahpur Santhali and Niz Daparkha were selected also with the object of studying the impact on the Santals (Scheduled Tribe) and the Bantars (Scheduled Caste) who are the exclusive inhabitants there.

Twenty-five per cent of the total families in every village except Niz Daparkha were selected and the heads of the selected families were questioned. In case of Daparkha which is divided into three small parts, one part, i.e., Niz Daparkha was selected for our study and every family of the village (forty-four in number) was considered. As this part of Daparkha is inhabited by Bantars, a small but very interesting Scheduled Caste, this village was treated separately.

The people, in general, responded well. But in two villages, the villagers took very little interest and in their view the investigation carried no more meaning than providing a means of employment to some men by the State Government.

The investigation was carried out in the last week of July, 1963 when the rainy season was in full swing rendering the bad communications more deplorable. The villages had to be reached either by bullock carts or on foot and often by wading through water. The Block Development Officers of Raghopur, Udakishanganj and Tribeniganj Blocks under whose jurisdiction the six villages fall were helpful.

A brief description about the villages studied needs here mention for a proper appreciation of the problem studied.

About the villages.

Sahpur Santhali.—A village, under Udakishanganj Block of Madhepura subdivision, is situated at a distance of about 8 miles from Udakishanganj, the headquarters of the Block office and about 14 miles from Bihariganj (by road) the nearest railway station. The Bihpur-Birpur Road under the State Public Works Department links this village with Udakishanganj and Madhepura as well. But the plying of bus service on this road up to Madhepura discontinues during the rainy season because of want of some culverts, etc. From Bihariganj there is a road of the same department up to Udakishanganj. The total length of the road is about six miles out of which nearly 1½ miles of the road is unmetalled and during the rains accumulation of rain water thereon prevents even plying of the Jeep on this road. The only conveyance during the rainy season is bullock carts.

The village is divided into two separate units, one known as Sahpur Santhali and the other as simply Sahpur. Both combining together has the common name, 'Sahpur Chaumukh', whose population according to 1951 census was 2,202 persons (1,186 males and 1,016 females) and had an area of 2,096 square acres. According to 1951 census the number of occupied houses is 335 and the number of literate males and females was 266 and 43 respectively According to a sample survey conducted by the Statistics Department in the month of June, 1963 the population of the village is 3,120 (1,656 males and 1,464 females) excluding 104 births and 5 deaths during 1962-63. According to this survey the number of household is 558. Separate figures of Sahpur Santhali are not available either in 1951 Census Report or in the report of the sample survey. For the investigation purpose Sahpur Santhali was selected wherein 77 Santal families reside at present (July, 1965) and their population is roughly estimated to be about 700.

Village Sahpur has one middle school one school under Extension and Improvement of Primary Education Scheme, one government grain *gola*, one *milan mandir* where generally the *Gram Panchayat* holds its meetings and one Durga temple

At Goalpara, about two miles away from Sahpur Santhali, a *hat* is held twice every week. The basic requirements are available in the *hat*. Large quantities of maize and *marua* are sold. A large number of Santals of this village go to the *hat* only for relaxation and meeting others. The Santal girls are seen in the *hat* in gala dress consisting of fine *sari* and blouse in place of their original dress of *panchi* and *lungi*.

Jhanjhri.—A village at a distance of about 8 miles from Udakishanganj and 2 miles from Goalpara. From Goalpara to Udakishanganj. Bihpur-Birpur Road runs and through this road the village is connected with Udakishanganj and Madhepura, the subdivisional headquarters. From Goalpara to Jhanjhri the road is not

metalled and during the rainy season the condition of the road becomes deplorable. The area of the village is 1,104 square acres and its population is 2,160 (1,143 males and 1,017 females) according to the census of 1951. The number of households according to that census is 335 and the number of literate males and females is 158 and 13 respectively. The village is inhabited by the people belonging to different castes and religion, mainly Brahmin, Goala and Mohammadan. The nearest *hat* is held at Goalpara twice a week. There are one lower and one upper primary schools and one library.

Tintolia.—A small *tola* of Chilauni village under Raghopur Block of Supaul subdivision is situated at a distance of about 11 miles from Raghopur by P. W. D. road. The road from Raghopur to Pratapganj—a distance of about 8 miles, is metalled but is breached by two streams without any bridges. During the rainy season the communication from Pratapganj to Raghopur is virtually cut off and hence Tintolia which is linked to Raghopur through Pratapganj also becomes isolated from communication point of view.

The population of Tintolia according to *Parivar Pustika*, Part I compiled in 1962 by *Gram Sevak* is 1,034 (340 adult males, 342 adult females and 352 children). The total number of householdings is 167. The village is inhabited by the people belonging to Khatwe, Patwa, Dom, Dhanuk, Goala, Mali, Suri, Teli and Kamar castes. There is one Bennet (Christian) family, which has settled at Diwanganj, about a mile from this village. In the village there are one upper primary school, one library, one *milan mandir*, one Health Sub-Centre, one *Kirtan Mandali* and one Youth Club. There is also one flour and rice husking mill. The total number of literate persons is 105 which includes 2 I.As. and five matriculates.

Pratapganj Tola.—A village on the way to urbanisation is situated within Bhabanipur *mouza* at a distance of about 8 miles from Raghopur, the headquarters of its Block office with which it is linked with a road of P. W. D. But as mentioned earlier, this road becomes unserviceable during the rains. The population of the village is 1,876 with 294 households. The village is inhabited by Goalas, Baniyas, Kayasthas, Telis, Suris. Dhobis, Hajams, Dhanuks, Sonars and Kamars. In addition to them there are some Marwari families most of whom carry on business. There are about 50 shops. Most of them deal in cloth and foodgrain. There is also a police-station which is likely to be shifted to Raghopur. At present the office of the police-station is housed in the building of Pratapganj Railway Station.

Pratapganj was once linked with Nirmali by railway but the railway line was dismantled because of the Kosi floods in early twenties. This place has no railway route since then. The nearest railway station of this place is at Dauram Madhepura which is at a distance of about 30 miles. There is a dispensary which has been

converted into Static Health Centre in 1960. The dispensary was provincialised by the State Government in 1955 and since then it is under the management of the State Government. Previously it was under the management of the District Board. Under this Static Health Centre, there are three health sub-centres situated at Radhanagar (8 miles from Pratapganj), Daulatpur (6 miles from Pratapganj) and Tintolia (3 miles away from Pratapganj). The Health Centre, previously known as dispensary is a very old medical institution and saved a good number of lives when malaria and *kala-azar* were virulently prevalent due to Kosi floods.

There is one high school since 1950. There are two middle schools one for boys and the other for girls. The girls' middle school has only 11 students. There are also two upper primary schools one for the boys and the other for the girls. There are two libraries and one *Milan Mandir* in the village. There is a dak bungalow maintained by the Saharsa District Board.

Daparkha.—Under Tribeniganj Block in Supaul subdivision, is situated at a distance of about 3 miles from Block office at Tribeniganj. There is a P. W. D. road from Pipra to Tribeniganj but the road is incomplete and due to accumulation of rain water on the way the communication is practically cut off during the rainy season. Tribeniganj is connected with Madhepura a distance of about 27 miles by road *via* Pipra. In between Daparkha and Tribeniganj there is a village *Dagar* which is breached by two streams. They render the communication difficult when they are full during the rainy season.

According to the census of 1951 the area of the village is 2,487 square acres with a population of 5,767 souls (3,062 males and 2,705 females). The number of house-holds is 575. According to the census of 1961 the area of the village is 2,371 square acres and its provisional population as reported by the Block office is 3,540 with 650 households. The village is divided into three *tolas* one of which is Niz Daparkha or Chakarman Sardar's Tola. It is exclusively inhabited by 44 families of Bantar caste and was particularly selected for the investigation. Chakarman Sardar is the name of the headman of the village and hence the village is also known after his name. In Daparkha there are one lower primary, one upper primary and one middle schools. There is also a library. In Niz Daparkha there is not even a matriculate so far (1963). The number of students reading in upper primary school and middle school is 3 and 2 respectively.

Barjuri Tola.—A village under Tribeniganj Block, is situated at a distance of about six miles from Tribeniganj. There is a village road connecting Barjuri with Tribeniganj but during the rainy season due to accumulation of rain water at several places on the road, the bullock cart can only be used as conveyance.

Barjuri consists of many *tolas,* one of which is proper Barjuri Tola which was selected for investigation. In this *tola* there are only 68 families excluding 3 families of foreign nationals (two Canadians and one American). The roughly estimated population of this *tola* is about four hundred persons. The provisional population of Barjuri village (*mauza*) is 5,246 persons and the area of the *mauza* extends over 6,167 square acres according to the Block Office. Barjuri *tola* is inhabited by people belonging to Goala, Kalwar, Mali, Bantar, Mushar, Halwai, Dusadh and Dhobi (Mohammadan) castes. In this *tola* there is one middle school, and a church, the expenditure of which is partly met by the Brethren In-Christ Mission and partly by the Indian Church. There are also one dispensary and an agricultural farm which are maintained entirely by the said B. I. C. Mission. The B. I. C. Mission has been functioning in this village since 1917.

The history of the Christian Church in this village is said to date back to the last quarter of the 19th century. In the initial stage the church used to be held in a private house of Sobha Singh who introduced Christianity into this village. A church building was constructed in 1947. There are only ten Indian Christian families at present.

Impact on Agriculture.

Kosi was not always a river of terror or sorrow for Saharsa district. In an ordinary high flood a major portion of the low lands used to be submerged under Kosi water for about four months and *bhadai* crops did not have much chance of survival. Paddy on the low lands used to be damaged. But the produce of the paddy on the uplands was better as the flood water helped irrigation. The low lands also used to get deposit of silt which was a great help for a better produce of *rabi* crop. The agricultural picture before Kosi erosion affected the villages and the area was not bad; even the small cultivators used to get very good yield which more than compensated him for the loss of *bhadai* and even the paddy on the low lands. If the small cultivator had some upland he was assured a good paddy crop.

Changes came when Kosi started eroding the area. Frosion roughly started near about 1922 so far as the villages in which investigations were carried out are concerned.

Village.	Year of erosion.
Pratapganj	1922-23.
Niz Daparkha Barjuri ..	In the early twenties of the present century.
Sahpur Santhali ..	1936-37.
Jhanjhri	1936-37.
Tintolia	1938-39.

Soil Erosion by the Kosi floods.

It is commonly accepted that Kosi before changing its course from one alignment to another often used to erode the area where it was flowing a few years ago. Erosion by the Kosi floods meant destruction of houses, trees, plants and often orchards. Kosi in the course of erosion deposited coarse sand on the soil which rendered the land almost barren. Consequently, Kosi eroded territories partially depleted of the indigenous population. The investigator of the Gazetteer Revision Section gathered that Shri M. P. Koirala and Shri B. P. Koirala, ex-Prime Ministers of Nepal who had been living in Dipnagar near Chilauni *dhar* had to migrate to Nepal when their houses were eroded by Kosi.

Erosion had been very acute in three out of six villages surveyed, namely, Tintolia, Pratapganj, and Barjuri Tola. It was gathered that practically the entire village of Tintolia had to be shifted quite a few furlongs because of the erosion. A number of inhabitants of Tintolia left the village. Pratapganj had a railway connection but the railway lines were damaged and had to be dismantled because of the Kosi flood and erosion. Pratapganj has not yet been put again on the railway map ... pensary building at Pratapganj was very badly d... ted flowing just by the middle of the ...gers living on the belt had to shift. ...oded and the villagers had to shift to ...nhabitants of Barjuri Tola were very ... leave the village in search of employ- ... and *pater* species of wild grass started ...elding fields became a jungle of *kans* ... put completely out of gear.

	1	2	3	4
Malaria ..		3,232	2,648	1,838
Kala-azar ..		2	2	2
Hookworms ..		176	139	63
Daily average attendance of patients.		41.6	30.35	22.4

...e is as deep here as in the other parts ... stuck to the villages even at the cost

Impac...es of occupation and daily mode of

The impact of the Kosi ...ed on the crops started rearing cattle the affected villages was cons... had not been much affected by the change in the mental make-u... products became their main sustenance a constant frustration born o... umption or for sale. The abundance Kosi havoc was a constant te... d the habit of fishing as an occupation the people did not have m... m of diet. The Brahmins of this area be threatened by being ...h eaters. The wild life in the shape of away if the mother had ...ds grew rapaciously in the jungle of frighten the children to ... few villagers took to *shikar* and the abun- Kosi river used to be ke... ely dear to the Santals of the Sahpur them away. Born and ...g and trapping. parents all the time at t... a generation has grown u... complex.

...did not solve the real economic poverty ...sion brought in. At Daparkha village the ... Sardar, Manrup Sardar, Ramrup Sardar ...y working as daily labourers on others' ...oods they were big cultivators and considered

* The Editor as a Subdi... ample experience of the ...

to be quite rich. The Santals of Sahpur Santhali and Bantars of Daparkha were the worst victims. Exploitation by the *Mahajans* became a prominent feature. The incidence of indebtedness on land was quite heavy. Change of ownership of land became common. Chunks of lands were swallowed permanently by the river as well.

It is peculiar that in spite of the economic conditions and ravages of the Kosi, the people did not give up what they thought their social and religious obligations. That made their position all the more worse and they went quickly into the clutches of the *Mahajans*. It is understood that the bulk of the silver and gold ornaments of quite a large number of the villagers had to be sold. The investigator was told that selling of silver ornaments at the rate of 3 annas per *tola* or gold ornaments at the rate of Rs. 12 per *tola* had become quite common.

Some of the villagers of Pratapganj and Barjuri Tola, however, turned themselves into small businessmen. They used to purchase foodgrains from other villages unaffected by the Kosi floods and erosion at a cheaper rate and sold their grains in the Kosi-affected local markets at a higher rate. Boat t village became quite common
and quite a few persons used to wor nly ten Indian connec-
tion with the merchandise that used
Sahibganj, Katihar, Sonbarsa and Mad lture.
by boats and even non *Mallahs* took t
or or sorrow for Saharsa
Kosi floods played havoc with th ajor portion of the low lands
Kala-azar, various kinds of bowel trou for about four months and
more than 90 per cent of the popul. of survival. Paddy on the
frequently and took a heavy toll of le produce of the paddy on
casualty at village Jhanjhri was very ter helped irrigation. The
practically surrounded by water on al which was a great help for
wade through the water to go out of cultural picture before Kosi
putrefied water dank with rotten leav was not bad; even the small
villagers for all purposes. which more than compen-
en the paddy on the low
Pratapganj dispensary figures of p upland he was assured a
idea of the incidence of disease.

Year.		
1929	..	..
1930	..	..
1931	..	..
1937	..	..
1938	..	..
1939	..	..

ling the area. Erosion
he villages in which
ar of erosion.
}.
early twenties of the
ent century.

These were the years of the worst depredations of Kosi floods. Mobile boat dispensaries used to move about giving as much medical relief as possible. Palludrine, Mapacrine and other tablets used to be distributed to masses at the *hats* and *melas* and wherever there would be a collection of men*. Medical relief, however, could only be a palliative measure as the main problem was the Kosi flood and the consequent economic starvation and eating of bad food and drinking foul water. It is only after the Kosi floods started subsiding because of a shift of the course of the river that the incidence of health started improving. A chart of the break-up figures of some of the common diseases in the same Pratapganj Dispensary for the years 1953 to 1962 will show how the incidence of health improved only when the ravages of Kosi floods had subsided.

Name of the diseases.	1953 No. of patients.	1954 No. of patients.	1955 No. of patients.	1956 No. of patients.	1957 No. of patients.	1958 No. of patients.	1959 No. of patients.	1960 No. of patients.	1961 No. of patients.	1962 No. of patients.
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11
Malaria ..	3,232	2,648	1,838	1,719	1,635	1,199	523	143	Nil	Nil.
Kala-azar ..	2	2	2	1	Nil	Nil	1	Nil	Nil	Nil.
Hookworms ..	176	139	63	153	152	116	191	176	200	133
Daily average attendance of patients.	41.6	30.35	22.4	Not available.	20.52	17.80	29.38	27.71	31.65	21.26

Impact on Social Life.

The impact of the Kosi floods on the social and daily life of the affected villages was considerable. There was a fundamental change in the mental make-up of the average man. He lived under a constant frustration born of a sense of insecurity and fear. The Kosi havoc was a constant terror and even when there were no floods, the people did not have much joy in life. Even the babies used to be threatened by being told Kosi-*Mai* coming and washing them away if the mother had to pull them up. Lullaby songs used to frighten the children to sleep. Small children in households near Kosi river used to be kept tethered lest a sudden Kosi flood wash them away. Born and brought up in such atmosphere, seeing the parents all the time at the edge of a mental and physical collapse, a generation has grown up in this area with a peculiar mental complex.

* The Editor as a Subdivisional Magistrate of a neighbouring subdivision had ample experience of the misery of the Kosi affected villages.

There was, however, a change in the mental attitude so far as the spirit of co-operation is concerned. It was ascertained that in the villages of Barjuri Tola, Jhanjhri and Pratapganj the boats belonging to a few rich persons were freely utilised by the common men of these villages and also by the common men of other villages. Boats were almost a public property at that time and even children and women had become expert boatmen. If a boat was to go to a market at a distance, the entire village was informed and any one having any business in the market would be accommodated if there was space. There were not much of bickerings or narrow feelings so far as their daily life was concerned. The people lived a much fuller community life than what they are doing now. Casteism was at a low premium and men of high and low castes were brought together by the touch of adversity. It was also gathered that when there was no high flood and erosion, the villagers used to arrange *Jhaler*—a boating preferably in the night with music or *gharnai*, i.e., a conveyance of earthen pots and bamboo stick which float on water as a form of entertainment. But this spirit of co-operation and fellow-feeling has sadly declined particularly after the attainment of independence in 1947 and at the moment there is a lot of political careering in the area visited. The attitude of the people that was surveyed by the investigator shows that frictions, tensions and casteism are quite rampant now and mostly due to reasons of power politics. Prior to 1947 and during the period of Kosi floods, the villagers were much better knit and they all yearned and fought together for political freedom even when they were in the midst of adversity. But at the moment there are distinct forces of disintegration excepting in the two villages of Sahpur Santhali and Daparkha. The remaining villages where the people of various castes and particularly some of the higher castes are out for a political career, there are frictions regarding the position of the *Mukhiya*, etc. Usually the villagers are split into two groups. At Jhanjhri there were common complaints that the *Mukhiya* was himself encouraging differences and litigation.

A sense of social inertia had been encouraged due to Kosi ravages and the people of the area had become restless and averse to manual labour as there was hardly any scope for manual work. Now although the conditions have improved, there is a spirit of hang-over and that spirit of inertia has still continued in some way or other. A study of some of the factors that make up a man in this area in comparison with those in non-Kosi affected area gives the impression that the people of this area are still rather allergic to hard work and appear to be more talkative and ease-loving. In spite of the soil conditions having improved and clear possibilities of better horticulture and introduction of crops like sweet potato and sugarcane, very few of the villagers have started their cultivation. Excepting the Santals very few persons of the labouring classes of this area went

to earn their livelihood by the construction of the Kosi barrage or digging of the Kosi canals.

Hindus as a class are fatalists and the people of Saharsa district are probably much more fatalistic because of the Kosi ravages. To them the world is *Maya* (illusion), otherwise how could Kosi *Maiya* (mother) be so unkind on her children by constant floods and ruining their households.

Another impact on the society due to Kosi floods has been closer relationships through inter-marriages within the district. Because of the floods spread over a considerable period, many families outside the district would not willingly marry their daughters or sons in Saharsa district. The people of Saharsa could not possibly meet the high demands of dowry which used to be insisted on by persons of other districts. As a result it was found that most of the families in the villages studied had marital relationship in villages within the district. This was also noticed among the Santals and the Bantars of the villages of Sahpur Santhali and Niz Daparkha. The sense of insecurity also prompted the persons of this area to have relations through marriages with families within the district so that in times of distress they could help one another.

Inter-caste relationship was much more harmonious during the period of Kosi floods. The help of the lower caste people was particularly necessary for the clearance of the jungles of *kans* and *pater* and for doing other hard manual work. The lower caste people were not treated with contempt but were treated as members of the family by a higher caste people. At Sahpur Santhali it was ascertained that the neighbouring jungles were cleared by the Santals and the ex-landlords of Shankarpur Raj settled the lands with the Santals. But later on the *Babuans* of Sahpur became their landlords and there were litigations and an attempt was made to drive away the Santals. It was also gathered that a few decades back there was a great agitation among the Santals in this village helped by the Santals of other villages and the matter had to be litigated in court. Their aftermath is still there and the relations between *Babuans* and Santals are very strained.

Impact on Education and Culture.

The impact of Kosi ravages for more than two decades affected the incidence of education and culture as well. Saharsa in the olden days when there was prosperity and ample leisure had a high incidence of education and culture. Certain branches of philosophy and poetry were developed and there was a high development of tantricism. Oriental learning had the preference for a long time and modern educational institutions, because of the far distance from Bhagalpur, the then district headquarters, were only a few. But the Kosi floods saw to the actual disappearance of a number of

such educational institutions and the decline of a number of them. Students had to give up studies and parents were forced to put them to some work for earning wages to meet the struggle for existence. The few educational institutions that lingered on could hardly be supervised by the inspecting agencies and did not receive adequate financial aid. Many of the villages, as mentioned before, were completely surrounded by waist high water and naturally the boys could hardly attend the schools regularly. In an era where struggle for existence was the all-pervading factor in human life one cannot expect any high incidence of education and culture. The Kosi floods have also washed away quite a few of the ancient relics and temples.

But the impact had one good result. The rural poets composed a large number of folk songs depicting their horror of Kosi while making their homages to Kosi Mother. These sons were the natural effusions of a section of people crushed economically and the tune of pathos and fear complex is stamped on them. Kosi folk songs came to be prepared practically for all social functions and rituals from birth to death. Even marriage *mandaps* (places) resounded with Kosi songs full of both cheer and dejection. The songs were an attempt to snatch something cheerful even from dire distress. These songs have been preserved particularly by the ladies and there are one or two books in Hindi which recorded a few of them. Some of the songs particularly meant for sowing and cultivating seasons speaking about the unknown future whether the crops would be reaped or not are treated as gems of Hindi literature. These Kosi folk songs should be collected and printed as in another one decade many of them would have been forgotten because of the change of better days.

Impact on Economic Condition.

The impact on the economic incidence of the people of the villages studied has been indicated earlier. The mere factor of the present quantity of land possessed as compared with the quantity possessed before Kosi floods came in would not be adequate to come to a decision as to the reasons for the present conditions. This factor, however, will help the investigation. The investigators found that many people claimed to have lost a good bit of their lands and mentioned that chunks of their lands had been swallowed up by the Kosi or had been sanded up. It was also claimed that they had to sell a portion of their land for their maintenance. The matter was not pursued by the investigators and it was not found out as to how much of the land did actually go into river Kosi, how much was sanded up and rendered useless and how much had to be sold. The reasons was that the investigators did not get help from the persons examined or the villagers refused to produce their documents or authoritative evidence to substantiate their claim. Under such circumstances the data collected as to the quantity of

land possessed before the Kosi floods and now on the mere verbal testimony of the persons cannot be treated as very reliable for coming to any firm conclusion. For example, one Brahmin family of village Jhanjhri mentioned that they had about 400 *bighas* of land prior to Kosi ravages but now they have only 25 *bighas*. The family members refused to show any proof as to how much had gone into river bed of the Kosi, what quantity of land had been sanded up and rendered uncultivable and what quantity of land had to be sold. The investigators were, however, satisfied that on the whole the quantity and quality of land possessed before the Kosi floods had started ravaging the area was more individually than the quantity possessed now. The *bataidars* of the area coming from such castes as Jolaha, Mushar, Dhunia and Dhobi now possess lesser quantity of *batai* lands if at all. The trend of giving *batai* had somehow abated and the present trend is now to utilise the services of a casual labourer on the payment of wages.

The village Niz Daparkha, however, needs a separate treatment. This village is exclusively inhabited by 44 Bantar families who belong to Scheduled Castes and have their own indigenous manners and customs. The investigators had studied all 44 families which count 120 adult males, 108 adult females and 150 children. They investigated to find out the quantum of land possessed by these Bantar families before the Kosi flood started ravaging the village. It was found that out of 44 families only three families could be described as large cultivators as they had 75 *bighas*, 36 *bighas* and 20 *bighas* of land respectively. As against this 6 families of Bantar had 5 *bighas* of land and another six families had less than 5 *bighas* of land. As many as 28 families had no land for cultivation before the Kosi ravages started. The picture now is very different. At present there is not a single family with more than 5 *bighas* of land. The main occupation of the Bantars is selling their casual labour on wages for some kind of farm work. The Bantars are very much indebted to the *Mahajans* and their economic condition is extremely wretched. The cheap grains like *marua* and maize are their principal diet and they were found very ill clad. The impact of Kosi floods on the lands of other people has naturally affected these Bantars, most of whom had no lands of their own at all. They are all expecting now that there will be a possibility of irrigation when Chilauni *dhar* gets water from Kosi channel.

At Barjuri village 36 Goala families formed the majority of the 71 families in the village. Nine families of Goalas studied, however, indicated that their present economic condition is not so bad as that of the four Mali, three Bantar, one Mushar and one Dusadh families in the village. The investigators were told that one of the Goala families had 25 *bighas* of land before the Kosi floods came. Goalas do not depend on their lands alone for their income. They keep cows and sell milk products. They willingly go out of the village to find other avenues of work. Some of them also have taken

up small business. The same observations could be made regarding Goalas of Pratapganj Tola. The period of Kosi floods in this village was for a number of years before 1936. After 1936 the Kosi changed its course towards Nirmali.

The condition of the Muslim families of Pratapganj Tola was also found to have much deteriorated. Nine Muslim families of Pratapganj Tola had been surveyed and it was found that only four families have lands now and in the case of each of them there has been a great reduction of the quantity of land. One Muslim family was said to have possessed 60 *bighas* of land as against 20 *bighas* by now. The villagers were unanimous that the Muslim families had gone on selling their lands to maintain themselves. Five Muslim families had taken to tailoring but their average income is found to be less than Rs. 100. Similarly, the condition of the Kayasthas of Pratapganj was found to have deteriorated considerably during the years of Kosi ravages and generally it may be said that this was due to their discharge of what they considered to be their social obligations such as heavy expenditure on marriages, *sradhs*, etc. Some of the members of Kayastha families had, however, gone out of village and taken to service. The condition of such families where there are one or two service holders appears to have been improving. Such occupational castes like Hajam (barber), Sonar (goldsmith), Kamar (blacksmith) who have stuck to their traditional occupations could be described to be living on a precarious margin. If some one of their families had taken up some job they were rather much better off. In the present set-up the occupational castes do not get sufficient work within a radius of 10 miles of their vlllages.

Impact on the Scheduled Tribes.

Our investigation shows that in spite of the ravages of the Kosi river there was practically no shift of the population of the Scheduled Tribes in spite of the fact that their economic condition is the worst. As a class they stuck to their villages in spite of manifold troubles. In this connection it has to be mentioned that the population of the Scheduled Tribes according to 1961 census is 7,605 in contrast to the 1951 census figure of 28,366.* This drop of the population is clearly impossible. It is regretted that in spite of repeated correspondence no elucidation was available from the office of the District Magistrate or the Census Superintendent, Bihar till we went into print. The District Magistrate's opinion also confirms our investigation that the Scheduled Tribes did not leave their villages in spite of the Kosi ravages. The population must have gone up at least 10 per cent above the population of 28,366 in 1951. It is also unfortunate that in the census of 1961 the figures for Backward Classes were not taken into account.

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* Census of India, 1961, Vol. IV, Bihar, Part II A General Population Tables, p. 507.

CHAPTER IV.

AGRICULTURE AND IRRIGATION.

LAND RECLAMATION AND UTILISATION.

Saharsa district has an area of 1,338,880 acres including unsurveyed area according to the census of 1951 out of which 12,899 acres are culturable waste lands*. Out of a total population of 1,308,198 persons, 1,223,460 or 93.5 per cent were engaged in agricultural occupations**. In order to encourage the reclamation of culturable waste lands, the Bihar Waste Land Reclamation, Cultivation and Improvement Act was passed in 1946. The Waste Land Reclamation Section is under the Revenue Department. There is a Waste Land Reclamation Officer for the district whose headquarters is located at Supaul. He is under the administrative control of the District Magistrate, Saharsa.

Manual reclamation is encouraged by the distribution of Land Improvement Loans. The District Development Office at Saharsa maintains the figures of loans and areas reclaimed under Land Improvement Loans. An enquiry shows that the rate is usually Rs. 40 as loan for reclamation of one acre of land. Correct figures given as loan for strictly reclamation purposes and the area actually reclaimed were not available. There is no follow up enquiry.

The Act has provision for settlement of waste lands for reclamation purposes but as yet (June, 1963) there has been no settlement of waste lands in the district under the Waste Land Reclamation Act. †Loans are also given for the purpose of tractors for mechanised reclamation of larger consolidated areas. Encouragement is also given to persons to reclaim waste lands by tractors without taking loans in the shape of giving technical advice. Large areas have been reclaimed with the help of tractors but correct figures are not available.

IRRIGATION.

Agriculture, the main occupation depends mainly on the availability of the quantity of water required in proper time. Rainfall has been the main source of water. Rainfall is not a dependable source of water and irrigational facilities are essential. The discussions in this connection in the recently published *District Gazetteer of Bhagalpur* also apply to this district. Saharsa was a part of Bhagalpur district till 1954.

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* *District Census Handbook of Saharsa* (1951), published in 1956, pp. 6, 91.

** *Ibid.*

† Such loan figures are in the statistics given in the text on "Banking, Trade and Commerce".

So far the older irrigational facilities are concerned, there were *bunds*, tanks, wells, etc. The old *District Gazetteer of Bhagalpur* (1911) mentions that in April, 1909 there were about 485 tanks in North Bhagalpur which included the subdivisions of Supaul and Madhepura (now Saharsa district). The Tiljuga and Dhimra rivers were bunded up and water was lifted by the contraption known as *karins* (palm-tree trunks hollowed out) to the higher levels and used for irrigation. Water was led from the reservoir formed by damming up the Tiljuga as far as nine miles north and south, and four miles east and west. There were also proposals for utilising the water of the river Kosi for irrigation along with the existing channels. But the proposal had not materialised. Embankments used to be raised for irrigational purposes. In 1874 at Rajhanpur in *pargana* Kabkhand, an embankment was erected by the Public Works Department along the banks of the river Parwane; another embankment was erected by Mr. Christian, indigo planter of Bangaon, on the banks of the river Dhimra, in Uttarkhand *pargana*. A number of other small embankments were scattered over the two subdivisions of Madhepura and Supaul which now comprise the district. The construction of small embankments, wells and reservoirs had continued. Temporary surface percolation *katcha* wells were commonly dug out in crop season for irrigation purposes. Such wells did not last very long. Contraptions like *karin*, sewing basket, etc., were used for lifting water from the pools.

In the last one decade a number of irrigation tanks, wells, tube-wells and *bandhs* have been constructed. According to the Land Revenue Administration Report for 1950-51 fifty-four minor irrigation schemes were completed. In Supaul, a *bandh* and a canal were constructed. It may be mentioned here that most of these irrigational provisions have from time to time been very heavily damaged and in some cases fully destroyed by the ravages of the river Kosi.

The area irrigated in the years 1921, 1931, 1941 and 1951 according to the census of 1951 is as follows*:—

Year.	Average net area irrigated in acres.
1921	37,661
1931	44,639
1941	83,071
1951	15,844

* *District Census Handbook of Saharsa*, 1951, p. 91.

The statement below gives the area (in acres) irrigated from different sources from 1957-58 to 1961-62*:—

Particulars.		Year.				
		1957-58.	1958-59.	1959-60.	1960-61.	1961-62.
1		2	3	4	5	6
Wells	..	216.00	500.00	630.00	449.30	327.89
Tanks	..	1,560.00	6,975.00	8,310.00	27.10	366.46
Open borings	..	N.A.	N.A.	N.A.	253.26	378.71
Rivers	..	N.A.	N.A.	N.A.	300.00	687.43
Bandhs	.	N.A.	N.A.	N.A.	N.A.	306.53
Other means	..	41,000.00	50,000.00	65,000.00	81.48	22.13
TOTAL	..	42,776.00	57,475.00	73,940.00	1,111.14	2,079.15

N.A.—Not available.

MEDIUM AND MINOR IRRIGATION SCHEMES.

Minor Irrigation schemes include *bandhs*, reservoirs, tanks, small protective embankments, etc., as well as repairs to old minor irrigation works that had been carried out in the last fifty years. Since 1947 these minor irrigation works were constructed by three agencies, the Revenue Department, the Agriculture Department and the Community Development Department. To avoid overlapping and wastage, they are now being carried out by the Unified Agency of Minor Irrigation. This agency was created in Government Order no. IDS-0169|59-Agri.—30380, dated the 23rd December, 1959|2nd January, 1960. An Additional Director of Agriculture (Engineering) has been appointed to be the in charge of this agency. He is responsible for all minor and medium schemes costing up to Rs. 1 lakh throughout the State irrespective of budget heads from which these schemes are financed. The schemes include the following:—

(1) Medium *ahars, pynes, bundhs,* etc., between Rs. 10,000 to Rs. 1,00,000.

(2) Minor *ahars, pynes, bundhs,* etc., costing up to Rs. 10,000.

(3) Installation of private tube-wells.

(4) Open borings with and without strainers.

(5) Surface percolation wells.

* *District Statistical Handbook of Saharsa*, 1961-62 (under publication).

(6) *Rahat* pumps.

(7) Distribution and maintenance of irrigational pumping sets including mobile or other pumping sets under boring scheme.

(8) Distribution of small irrigation pump.

The Minor Irrigation Division was set up at Saharsa on the 30th June, 1960.

Flow irrigation schemes are of the nature of closing perennial *dhars* by putting *bandh-cum*-sluices. With the formation of the Minor Irrigation Division probable sites for putting *bandh-cum*-sluices were tentatively drawn up on Kosi *dhars* and a list of such schemes was prepared. They were not approved on the ground that they will interfere with the Kosi Canal command and also on the ground that while the object of Kosi is to channelise important *dhars*, by closing subsidiary *dhars* the permanent obstructions would stand as hurdle and further with proposal of escapes in important perennial *dhars* the discharge will be fairly heavy. Since Minor Irrigation schemes within Kosi command are only meant to provide stop gap arrangement and heavy structures would not be desirable, it was decided that only the schemes sanctioned previously were to be completed. In new schemes there is generally objection from Kosi Department not to close the *dhars*.

Another scheme is of tube-well and 4″ open boring which can well fulfil the demand if properly utilised. There appears to be a good scope for it but the scheme is not being well worked out as the people are not prepared to contribute their share of 50 per cent of the cost.

This Division has completed about 300 tube-wells since its creation but a number of such tube-wells are reported to be lying unutilised as the parties do not want to undergo any expenditure for utilising them.

Surface wells, small reservoirs and *bandhs* are not generally successful due to sandy soil and inundation. Pumping sets would have been of some help. But the scheme of loaning pumping sets had proved absolutely unsuccessful and it was desired by the Government that one pumping set should be purchased for each *Gram Panchayat* fulfilling certain conditions. This idea received no response and a fair number of pumping sets are reported to be lying idle in stock (June, 1963). In 1962 only eight pumping sets of 5 Horse Power were sold although there were 99 pumping sets available for sale. The Medium Irrigation schemes in the district are mostly outside canal command.

There are many high patches of lands on which the canals will have no control within the command area and such lands can be irrigated only by Lift Irrigation either from tube-wells or from Kosi

perennial *dhars*. There are many *chaurs* in the district which when drained will yield crops. Not much work has been done yet in this respect. For this the scope of Bihar Private Irrigation Act has to be widened. With almost the entire area of Saharsa district covered by the Kosi Canal Project it has become difficult to propose Medium Irrigation schemes for any particular area as there is very little response from the public.

The following statement has been supplied to show the work done in the years 1961-62 and 1962-63:—

Serial no.	Name of work.	1961-62 and 1962-63 Achievement.		Area in acres expected to be brought under irrigation.
		Physical number.	Financial in rupees.	
1	Medium Irrigation ..	2	28,895	3,000
2	Minor *ahars*, *pynes* and *bandhs*	29	38,151	2,900
3	Surface percolation wells ..	35	10,516	68
4	Four inches open boring with strainer.	90	3,87,360	1,800
5	Installation of tube-wells ..	8	86,472	600
6	Sale of pumping sets .	28	47,600	560
7	Seed Multiplication Farm fencing	15	35,098	..
8	Seed Multiplication Farm irrigation	21 (completed in 1960-61).	..	..

Since the people within the embankments were liable to flood and inundation, they could not easily think of irrigational facilities. But now (June, 1963) when the embankments have been constructed and there is no heavy flood as used to be experienced before irrigational facilities are being thought of.

A survey of the embanked areas to locate the villages where irrigational facilities can be provided for the benefit of growing more food crop has been taken up.

Some sites have been selected for installation of tube-wells.

The other scheme is of lift irrigation from perennial *dhars* with the aid of pumping sets.

Another idea is to the closing of *dhars* to save crops like maize from early flood. For this channels have been suggested and further investigation work is in progress. No implementation is reported to have been done so far regarding these schemes.

Irrigation from Kosi canals has been discussed elsewhere.

SOILS.

On the basis of the morphological and chemical studies of the soils of this area the following soil series have been fixed:—

(1) *Lagma series*.—The series is characterised by sandy to loamy sub-soil. Its reaction is acidic and the acidity is either uniform or slightly increasing with depth.

The soil type associated with this series is of the lightest texture, i.e., loamy sand, silty sand, and silt loam. This series occupies the major portion of the district.

(2) *Kumarkhand series*.—This series resembles Lagma series in all respects except in soil reaction. This series varies between PH. 7.0 to 8.0 (neutral to alkaline).

The soil types associated with this series, are of light to medium heavy, the texture is sandy, loamy and clayee loam.

(3) *Nunautty series*.—This series lies mainly in low lands and medium lands having impeded drainage. The reaction is slightly alkaline to moderate alkaline. The sub-soil varies from silt loam to silty sand.

(4) *Chainpur series*.—This series also occupies a considerable area of the district. The series has been characterised to possess alternate layers of sandy sub-soil in small thickness. The important type associated with this series is silty sand.

Thus, the soil of the district is mostly sandy, specially the upland and medium land contain sandy loam to loam and low land loam to clayee loam. The most sandy tracts are Kahra, Sourbazar east, Uda Kishanganj, Madhepura east, Singheshwar east, Chatapur, Murliganj, Kumarkhand, Birpur and Supaul.

The whole district is a tract of many streams which branch off the river Kosi and used to bring in sand and silt, thus, changing the topography and physical features of the tract. The Kosi used to change her course with a sort of periodicity so that it would return to her original stream after about a century. Now as the Kosi floods visited a particular tract of the district, the sand and silt would be deposited in the tract. Seeds of weeds and grass like *kans, jhaua* and *pater* would also be brought along with the silt and *kans, pater* and *jhaua* would grow wild and cropping would become difficult. The *kans, pater* and *jhaua* jungles had become the abode of the wild animals which were a menace to the crops. Active measures were taken by the Waste Land Reclamation Section in eradicating the weeds and making the lands cultivable. *Shikar* parties were helped with cartridges and bullets to destroy the wild animals. Large tracts of *kans* and *pater*-infected lands were made cultivable with the help of tractors.

In such newly reclaimed tracts two different grades of lands have been noticed. One type called *bharna*, i.e., sanded tract which is usually very light and it takes a pretty long time to disintegrate into soil for cropping purposes and the other type is known as *chap* and has a lot of silt.

The *bharna* land gradually becomes more and more suitable for upland cropping and by proper lay out paddy may be raised also. Generally speaking the *bharna* land is suitable for monsoon maize, sugarcane, potato, etc. In the *chap* land paddy (broadcast), *moong* and maize are grown. These *chap* lands are cropped as early as February and March. The *moong* crop is harvested by May-June. Maize of early variety is harvested in the beginning of July and then paddy is grown to be harvested late in the winter. Between these two types (*bharna* and *chap*) there is another type of mid land which is suitable both for upland crops and early low land crops. It is there that some fine varieties of paddy have grown by transplantation.

SEEDS AND CROPS.

It will be interesting to give the earlier picture of the crops and cultivation from the *Survey Settlement Report of Bhagalpur (1902–10)*.* The statement that follows gives the distribution of the crops over the different *thanas* in the northern part of Bhagalpur district (now Saharsa):—

Name of the thana.	Area in acres.	Rice. Aghani. Area in acres.	Aghani. Percentage to net cropped area.	Bhadai. Area in acres.	Bhadai. Percentage to net cropped area.	Total. Area in acres.	Total. Percentage to net cropped area.
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
			Supaul subdivision.				
Pratapganj ..	166,073	57,209	43 90	26,411	20.27	83,620	64.17
Supaul ..	365.644	160,289	53.44	48,070	16.03	208,359	69.47
Total ..	531,717	217,498	50.55	74,481	17.31	291,979	67.86
			Madhipura subdivision.				
Madhipura ..	298,644	120,168	50.63	50,041	21.08	170,209	71.71
Bangaon ..	165,083	74,721	59.51	8,465	6 74	83,186	66.25
Kishunganj ..	157,968	63,881	60 21	6,097	5.75	69,978	65.96
Total ..	621,695	258,770	55.18	64,603	13.77	323,373	68.95

* *Final Report on Survey and Settlement Operations in the Bhagalpur District* (1902—10), by P. W. Murphy, published in 1912, pp. 108—110.

Name of the thana.	Area in acres.	Wheat.		Barley.		*Marua.*	
		Area in acres.	Percentage to net cropped area.	Area in acres.	Percentage to net cropped area.	Area in acres.	Percentage to net cropped area.
1	2	9	10	11	12	13	14
		Supaul subdivision.					
Pratapganj ..	166,073	10,373	7.96	506	.39	13,812	10.60
Supaul.. ..	365,644	26.611	8.86	6,056	2.02	52,869	17.63
Total ..	531,717	36,984	8.60	6,562	1.53	66,681	15.50
		Madhipura subdivision.					
Madhipura ..	298,644	18,664	7.86	10,459	4.41	41,057	17.30
Bangaon ..	165,083	5,173	4.56	5,673	4.51	24,465	19.49
Kishunganj ..	157,968	2,101	1.98	4,848	4.57	3,305	3.12
Total ..	621,695	26,478	5.65	20,980	4.47	68,827	14.68

Name of the thana.	Area in acres.	Makai.		Gram		Other foodgrains including pulses.	
		Area in acres.	Percentage to net cropped area.	Area in acres.	Percentage to net cropped area.	Area in acres.	Percentage to net cropped area.
1	2	15	16	17	18	19	20
		Supaul subdivision.					
Pratapganj ..	166,073	874	.67	369	.28	33,276	25.52
Supaul.. ..	365,644	149	.05	2,004	.67	47,902	15.91
Total ..	531,717	1,023	.24	2,373	.55	81,178	18.87
		Madhipura subdivision.					
Madhipura ..	298,644	174	.07	2,610	1.10	55,010	23.18
Bangaon ..	165,083	367	.29	181	.14	26,177	20.85
Kishunganj ..	157,968	12,853	12.11	662	.62	22,090	20.82
Total ..	621,695	13,394	2.85	3,453	.74	103,277	22.02

Name of the thana.	Area in acres.	Total food crops.		Total non-food crops.		Total cropped area in acres.
		Area in acres.	Percentage to total cropped area.	Area in acres.	Percentage to total cropped area	
1	2	21	22	23	24	25
			Supaul subdivision.			
Pratapganj	166,073	146,068	83.52	28,817	16.48	174,885
Supaul ..	365,644	356,406	90.39	38,299	9.70	394,705
Total ..	531,717	502,474	88.22	67,116	11.78	569,590
			Madhipura subdivision.			
Madhipura ..	298,644	305,608	90 45	32,259	9.55	337,867
Bangaon ..	165,083	152,338	93.13	11,230	6.87	163,563
Kishunganj ..	157,968	118,256	92.71	9,301	7.29	127,557
Total .	621,695	576,197	91.61	52,790	8.39	628,987

The following quotations are of great interest:—

"..........Bhadai rice, as has been mentioned before, is practically confined to Supaul and Madhipura subdivisions, and accounts for only 9.22 per cent of the net cropped area.

"After rice *marua* is the most important crop .... In Partabganj, Supaul, Madhipura and Bangaon it averages 18 per cent of the cropped area, and in the Supaul and Madhipura subdivisions it takes the place of rice as the staple food crop, being eaten by all the proper classes.

"Maize........ comes next after *marua* .... It is also sown in the southern part of Kishunganj. In that *thana* it is customary to sow rice and maize together in the beginning of June, about the time when the Kosi waters begin to rise. This ripens and is cut early in August before the floods have risen sufficiently to damage it. The winter rice is cut at the usual time in November and December.

"Oilseeds are the most important of the non-food crops, ... The most important is linseed,........ .... chiefly grown in .... Supaul and Madhipura. Next comes mustard . ...

"Sugarcane is not an important crop .... It is chiefly grown in Supaul (where are a few sugar factories) ....

"Formerly indigo was extensively cultivated in the district, particularly in the north. The industry has gradually been given up, ... Formerly there were factories at Bhatnia, Cchandipur, ... Singeswar, Rajpur .... Simraha, ... Kataia, Pipra .... Hulas, Bhairo, Babhani, Baijnathpur, Teria, ...Murwala Bishunpur, Dhangama, Bhawanipur, Gobargarha, Permanandpur, Latona, Kashnagar, Nardah........ Chaura,......... Tulsia ....

"............Latona and Bangaon factories are still inhabited, but no indigo is manufactured in them. The others are nearly all abandoned. Most of them were built by Europeans between 1830 and 1860, but a few were also built by local *zamindars*. For instance, Marwala belonged to Panchagachhia Babus, ..."

The picture as given in the *Survey Settlement Report* does not hold good now. There have been great changes due to the river Kosi. As mentioned elsewhere the river Kosi began to visit the eastern portions of Madhepura subdivision from 1918 and became a curse to the subdivision. By 1923 the river Kosi had a further swing towards the west and practically the whole of Saharsa district (at that time Supaul and Madhepura subdivisions) was affected. The Kosi also silted up most of the other rivers of the district like Parwane, Tilawe, etc. In 1938 the river Kosi completely changed its course from Purnea district and became almost the single river of Saharsa district which has had the full impact of her vagaries. Large stretches of lands were devastated by inundation sand. Even large trees and mango-orchards withered away. The Kosi floods brought in many diseases and the people were constantly suffering from various diseases.

The Bihar Earthquake of 1934 had also materially affected the district. Some of the river beds were raised and some new channels were revived in their places. Stretches of land in some *thanas* deteriorated as a result of sand oozing out of the surface of the earth and making dunes.

The river Kosi has been responsible for the change in the crop pattern of the district. The district is now growing jute and maize in large quantities. Both *bhadoi* and *aghani* paddy are grown. *Marua* and oilseeds continue to be grown. Cultivation of indigo has completely disappeared. Sugarcane cultivation has grown up considerably. Hasanpur Sugar Mill in Samastipur subdivision consumes a large portion of the cane grown in Saharsa. There is

probability of a further spurt when the sugar factory at Banmankhi in Purnea district is started. Banmankhi has railway connection with Saharsa. The area under maize has increased considerably in the western parts of the district wherefrom Kosi has just shifted to Darbhanga district.

According to 1951 census the picture of Saharsa district has been shown in the following charts:—

(a) Classification of land in acres.*

Total area in acres (Geographical area including unsurveyed).	Net area sown.	Area sown more than once.	Current fallows.	Area under orchard.	Culturable waste.	Not available for cultivation
1	2	3	4	5	6	7
1,338,880	807,466	217,454	120,221	16,447	112,899	281,847

(b) Progress of cultivation during three decades†.

Average net area sown in acres.				Average area sown more than once in acres.			
1951	1941	1931	1921	1951	1941	1931	1921
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
807,466	743,480	816,998	873,613	217,454	200,610	166,947	271,438

(c) Area under principal crops in acres‡.

Rice.	Wheat.	Maize.	Gram.
390,095	48,929	134,813	47,387

The principal crops grown in the district are paddy, maize, jute, wheat, barley, *marua* and sugarcane. The cultivators are encouraged to grow the improved varieties of these crops. One seed multiplication farm has been opened in each *Anchal*. The improved seed varieties are evolved at the Regional Research Stations and supplied to the district and subdivisional farms for multiplication. The pedigree seeds are multiplied and made available to the cultivators of the *Anchal*.

* *District Census Hand-book of Saharsa* (1951), p 91.

† *Ibid.*

‡ *Ibid.*

NOTE.—The figures are based on average for five years ending with crop-year 1949-50.

FLOOD RESISTANT AND DEEP WATER PADDY.

In the flooded areas within the Kosi embankments and in the other low-lying areas in the district the variety known as BR 13 is grown. This variety can withstand submergence for 7 to 10 days without causing any remarkable detrimental effect on yield. Transplanting is taken up earlier in early flooded zones.

The deep water paddy or floating paddy is sown broadcast from the month of March to May and are harvested in December. The main characteristic of the deep water paddy is that it grows with the rise of level of water to maintain its tip above the flood level. The stem grows rather zigzag inside the water and has a tendency to crawl on the surface, and this habit is responsible for their floating characteristic. Tillers and roots are produced at nodes above the stem base. These roots supplement the poorly developed root system of the plant. The crop can be taken successfully when the rise of the water is gradual. The crop is lost if the area is suddenly submerged due to abrupt drainage of water. On maturity the ears above the water surface are harvested with the help of a boat.

Local strains of paddy grown in this district are *Singra, Desharia* and *Barobar*. *Nazir, Kalyani* and *Ramdulari* are grown in normal condition where *Singra, Desharia* and *Barobar* are grown as deep water paddy. Paddy being the main crop of the area, can be grown in sandy land, if the water-supply is adequate. New varieties of both *Aus* (summer) and *Aman* (winter) paddy are now being grown.

Outturn of Rice.

The following yearwise figures supplied by the office of the Deputy Director of Agriculture, Saharsa will show the outturn of rice from 1955-56 to 1962-63:—*

Year.	Area in acres under (winter and autumn).	Outturn in tonnes (*Aghani*+*Bhadai*).
1955-56	318,540	90,933
1956-57	278,268	68,117
1957-58	222,400	19,220
1958-59	345,518	97,000
1959-60	214,979	Not available.
1960-61	277,593	95,278
1961-62	211,435	67,759
1962-63	327,959	134,983

* *District Statistical Handbook of Saharsa*, 1961-62 (under publication).

Harvest and Storage.

There is nothing exclusive in this district than Bhagalpur which finds mention in the re-written *Bhagalpur District Gazetteer* (1962).

Maize.

This is another main crop of the district. *Tinpakhia* maize is grown locally. There are two types of sowing prevalent in the district. One is to sow maize mixed with paddy and *moong* in low lands and flooded lands from March to April and the other on medium and up lands from April to May. Jaunpur and hybrid maize, the two improved varieties, are being introduced.

But the area under maize may deteriorate as soon as the Kosi Canal will come under operation.

The following yearwise figures supplied by the office of the Deputy Director of Agriculture, Saharsa, will show the outturn of maize from 1955-56 to 1962-63:—*

Year.	Area in acres.	Outturn in tonnes.
1955-56	49,840	17,069
1956-57	90,870	13,306
1957-58	74,770	12,094
1958-59	214,985	57,000
1959-60	126,359	Not available
1960-61	43,516	13,275
1961-62	55,142	10,980
1962-63	42,274	12,307

Wheat.

There are some improved varieties of wheat grown in this district.

(I) *N.P. 798.*- It is a selection of F 220 and N. P. 165. It comes to flower in 60—85 days and matures in 120—125 days. It is highly resistant to stem rust but susceptible to yellow rust. It yields on an average 20—25 maunds per acre. if there is irrigation

(II) *N.P. 799.*—It is a sister strain of N.P. 798, and resembles N.P. 798 in almost all easily distinguishable morphological character, agronomical performance and reaction against diseases. It also yields 20—25 maunds per acre in normal condition.

* *District Statistical Handbook of Saharsa*, 1961-62 (under publication).

(III) *N.P.* 761.—It is very early in maturity and flowers in 55—60 days. It is susceptible to all rusts. It is suitable for growing late in areas where the flood water recedes late. It may be grown even after the harvest of late *Aman* paddy.

(IV) *BR.* 319.—It flowers in about 60—65 days and matures in 120—125 days.

This grows on upland and in the area where deep flood is prevalent and no paddy cultivation is possible. Chausa, Alamnagar, Uda Kishanganj, part of Sonbarsa, Murliganj, Kumarkhand grow a lot of wheat. The figures below are supplied by the office of the Deputy Director of Agriculture, Saharsa for wheat crop:—*

Year.	Area in acres.	Outturn in tonnes.
1955-56	52,415	17,069
1956-57	41,439	13,306
1957-58	52,221	12,094
1958-59	44,516	8,000
1959-60	57,000	Not available.
1960-61	41,016	13,275
1961-62	54,991	16,980
1962-63	42,274	12,307

Jute.

There are two species capsularis and olitorious which are grown in this district. Capsularis is grown in quite a large area and olitorious in a very small area.

(I) *Capsularis.*—It is locally known as *Dacca.* It can withstand water stagnation provided the height is more than 5 feet before the flood comes. As such it is suitable for low-lying and flooded areas where it is generally double cropped with paddy. It can also be grown on medium and uplands. The improved varieties grown in this district are JRC 212 and JRC 321. It is sown from February to May.

The plant in JRC 212 is green and the quality of fibre is good. It has a high yield and is suited to up and medium lands. JRC 321 is an early quick growing type, suitable for double cropped lowland areas. The quality of the fibre is very good. It is flood resistant.

* *District Statistical Handbook of Saharsa*, 1961-62 (under publication).

(2) *Olitorious.*—Out of the olitorious strains JRC 632 is commonly grown in this district. It is a green type and with good yield. The quality of the fibre is good. It is sown in well drained upland sandy loam soil.

(3) *Patua.*—A local variety *channi* is also grown in this district. It is grown in upland where the soil is poor. The quality of fibre is good. The fibre could easily be extracted when the crop has dried completely. It is sown from April to June and harvested from October to December. Scarcity of water for rolling is a stumbling block to its cultivation.

The following figures supplied by the office of the Deputy Director of Agriculture, Saharsa will show the outturn of jute from 1955-56 to 1962-63:*—

Year.				Area in acres.	Outturn tonnes in (Jute Mesta).
1955-56	..	..	..	95,705	232,502
1956-57	..	..	..	185,584	423,0[illegible]
1957-58	..	..	.	161,307	213,832
1958-59	..	..	..	94,864	265,000
1959-60	..	..	..	61,884	Not available.
1960-61	..	..	..	70,409	Ditto.
1961-62	..	..	..	112,761	35,194
1962-63	..	..	..	117,888	35,628

Sugarcane.

A sugar factory is likely to be established soon at Banmankhi in Purnea district. It is expected that the area under sugarcane will increase and the improved varieties of sugarcane will be cultivated. At present only B.O. 14 and B.O. 17 varieties are grown and the area under sugarcane is not large.

Sugarcane has good prospect in this district as it is well grown even in sandy land. With irrigation assured by the Kosi Canal, the crop will have a better prospect.

Barley.

Barley is a good *rabi* crop for this district as it may be grown on sandy soil. The following figures supplied by the office of the Deputy Director of Agriculture, Saharsa will show annual outturn of barley from 1955-56 to 1962-63**:

Year.				Area in acres.	Outturn in tonnes.
1955-56	..	..	..	35,881	6,463
1956-57	.	..	.	29,755	2,733
1957-58	..	..	..	39,334	4,956
1958-59	..	..	..	46,128	9,000
1959-60	.	.	..	40,508	Not available.
1960-61	..	..	.	40,[illegible]58	6,772
1961-62	..	..	..	49,440	7,978
1962-63	..	..	..	40,287	7,469

* *District Statistical Handbook of Saharsa*, 1961-62 (under publication).
** *Ibid.*

Peas.

Due to light texture of soil of this district the cultivation of peas has proved very economical. It is sown in October and November and harvested in February. B.R. 12 variety of peas has shown good response having an yield of 10 to 12 maunds per acre.

Marua (Ragi).

No improved variety for this has yet been developed though work is being done at research stations for this. The table below supplied by the office of the Deputy Director of Agriculture, Saharsa shows the outturn of *marua* from 1955-56 to 1962-63*:—

Year.				Area in acres.	Outturn in tonnes.
1955-56	..	..	..	16,842	3,038
1956-57	..	..	..	30,552	8,597
1957-58	..	..	..	35,436	6,222
1958-59	..	..	..	79,182	Not available.
1959-60	..	..	..	52,879	Ditto.
1960-61	..	..	..	52,859	10,275
1961-62	..	..	..	47,234	9,831
1962-63	..	..	..	64,903	14,246

Jowar.

Jowar also grows in sandy belt specially in *rabi* season for grain and during *kharif* season for fodder only. It is sown or transplanted by the end of September. It is also drought-resistant crop suited to upland sandy soil. But during the year of heavy rains, water level rises and the crop is damaged. The area under this crop is small.

Other Food Crops

Among other food crops *moong, khesari, arhar* or *rahar, meth*, beans, *kalai*, etc., are grown in the district. All these are pulses. *Moong* is suited as hot weather crop of the district. It is sown in February and March and harvested in May and June. The average yield per acre is 8 to 10 maunds. It is sown exclusively or with paddy and maize. *Arhar* acreage is small.

Vegetables and Fruits.

Vegetables commonly grown in this district are potato, brinjal, lady's finger, tomato, cauliflower, cucurbita, gourd, cabbage, bean, spinach, etc.

* *District Statistical Handbook of Saharsa*, 1961-62 (under publication).

Sweet potato is grown in both *kharif* and *rabi* season. Sweet potatoes are in great demand and being cheap is largely consumed by the poorer classes.

Saharsa was once famous for fruits but due to the advent of Kosi and its ravages all the old orchards were damaged. New orchards are coming up quickly as the ravages of Kosi have been confined between the two embankments.

Fruits grown in this district include mango, guava, *lichi*, citrus, banana, *jamun*, custard apple, jack-fruit, etc.

There are different varieties of mangoes. The more important varieties are *malda, zardalu, bombai, fazli, himsagar, krishnabhog*, etc. The main mango-growing areas are Saharsa, Supaul, Baruari, Nauhatta, Shokhpur, Panchgachhia, Murliganj, Madhepura, Raghopur, Kunaulibazar, etc. With the control of Kosi it is expected that Saharsa will have her previous place as a mango-growing district like Darbhanga.

AGRICULTURAL IMPLEMENTS.

Primitive wooden ploughs and other implements are still in use. Some cultivators are now using a few of the improved agricultural implements like Bihar plough, Bihar cultivator, Bihar ridging plough and Japanese weeder. The use of Bihar ploughs has attained some popularity.

Tractors are also used by certain large cultivators who have got consolidated areas for cultivation. There is great scope for introducing better implements.

The following statement gives the number of agricultural implements and machinery acquired by the agriculturists in the district from 1956-57 to 1961-62*.—

Name of improved machinery and implements	1956-57	1957-58.	1958-59.	1959-60.	1960-61	1961-62
1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Bihar plough ..	23	Nil	1	[illegible]	213	250
Cultivator ..	Nil	4	Nil	..	56	65
Japanese weeder ..	57	33	Nil	1	235	326
Hand hoe ..	Nil	Nil	Nil	Nil	19	19
Ridger ..	7	4	Nil	1	6	38
Thrasher ..	Nil	2	Nil	Nil	2	4
Wet land puddler .	Nil	4	Nil	Nil	Nil	[illegible]
Seed drill .	Nil	Nil	1	3	Nil	4
Chaff cutter ..	Nil	Nil	Nil	13	23	36
Pumping set .	Nil	10	69	46	Nil	125
Bihar pump .	Nil	1	48	45	Nil	94

* *District Statistical Handbook of Saharsa*, 1961-62 (under publication).

MANURES AND FERTILIZERS.

Cow-dung, the droppings of sheep and goats and farm refuse are common manures. Cow-dung is very popular and it is unfortunate that cow-dung should be used as fuel. The cultivators are becoming compost minded and are using chemical and organic fertilizers. There are five Agricole Depots and fifty-three sole agents (June, 1963) for sale of fertilizers. The sale is going up.

The chemical analysis of soils has been completed. On the basis of soil survey and the experiments on different crops conducted by the Field Experimental Service, the doses of fertilizers have been recommended cropwise in each *Anchal*. The soil map of the district has also been prepared.

Green manuring is also an important process to increase the fertility of the soil. Green manuring is the practice of applying large quantities of green materials such as the leaves and twigs of various plants, trees and shrubs or crops which are specially cultivated for the purpose. This process benefits the soil with the addition of nitrogen. It also results in addition of organic matter. The important green manures used in the district are leguminous crops, such as, *sanai, dhaincha, moong* and *kalai.*

The formation of nitrates is less in the soil of a field with a crop growing on it than on an uncropped land. Fallow land helps in securing the formation of nitrates. Lands are also left fallow occasionally to increase the fertility.

Seed supply.—For better and improved seed supply the following farms are run by the State.

Sadar—4 at Bariahi, Sour Bazar, Sone Barsha, Nauhatta.

Madhepura—6 at Singheswar, Murliganj, Kumarkhand, Chausa, Alamnagar, Uda Kishanganj.

Supaul—9 at Kishanpur, Chatapur, Birpur, Nirmali, Raghopur, Tribeniganj, Pipra.

Each Block is supposed to have one seed multiplication farm. The area varies from 25 to 150 acres. The Bariahi farm is of 150 acres, Singheswar 50 acres and the others about 25 acres.

Seed supply is done direct to the cultivators under guidance of the Block staff sale basis.

Seed is supplied to the farms for growing plants and multiply seeds. Seed supplied by the Subdivisional farms, District or Range farms.

In Saharsa there is one District Farm at Agwanpur. 2 subdivisional farms one at Supaul and another at Singheswar (Madhepura).

Average staff—one Farm Assistant, 2 ploughmen, casual labourers, 2 pairs of bullocks. In 150 acre farm one Inspector, one

Chaukidar, one Sardar, 10 Ploughmen, 10 pairs of bullocks. In sub-division farm one Inspector, one Farm Sardar, one Chaukidar, 4 pairs of ploughmen and 4 pairs of bullocks.

About 500 mds. of seeds are produced and distributed in a farm of about 25 acres. Paddy (200 mds.), wheat (50 mds.), maize (50 mds.), sugarcane (200 mds.), jute (7 mds.).

Good demand for jute seeds.

Agriculture Irrigation Research Station at Madhepura—50 acres area. Experiments on the effect of Kosi water under particular requirements of different crops with the particular agro-climatic conditions of Saharsa district are done here under an Assistant Agronomist.

AGRICULTURAL PROBLEMS OF KOSI EMBANKED AREA AND THE *CROPPING PATTERN SUGGESTED.*

Since the construction of the Kosi embankments, the ravages of Kosi have been confined to Kosi embanked area. It is 3.5 lakh acres including Darbhanga district. There are 304 villages in Kosi embanked area out of which 243 villages belong to Saharsa district and 61 villages of Darbhanga district. The table below gives the name of the *Anchals*, number of villages, etc., of Saharsa district only:—

Name of *Anchals.*		Number of villages.	Portion of *thanas.*
1. Maheshi	..	46	75%
2. Nauhatta	..	37	75%
3. Supaul	..	29	25%
4 Kishanpur	.	32	50%
5. Nirmali	..	42	75%
6. Marauna	..	36	98%
7. Birpur	.	21	25%

In Kosi embanked area flood comes every year with the average discharge of 3 lakh cusecs during the period of June to September. The expected maximum discharge is 8 to 9 lakh cusecs. The flood begins to recede from October and it recedes completely by December. There will be no change in Kosi embanked area regarding the advent of flood even after the diversion of Kosi through the channels. The water will be diverted into the channels and during high floods. The water will not be allowed to pass through canals for fear of sand deposits. After study of flood behaviour it has been found that the Kosi embanked area may be divided into two zones, namely, early (1 5 lakh acres) and late flooded zones (2.0 lakh acres) so that it may be easier to prepare the cropping pattern of the area.

The flood visits the early flooded zones in May and June and remains up to September. The depth of flood water varies from

3 feet to 10 feet. When the flood discharge rises to 1.5 lakh cusecs this area is flooded and the hot weather crops like maize, *moong* and *aus* paddy are subjected to damage. There are no jungles of *kans* and *pater* in this zone. Most of the lands are sandy. Approximately 1.50 lakh acres of land fall under this zone. In this zone half of Maheshi and Nauhatta, three-fourth of Supaul, half of Nirmali and Marauna fall within this zone. The villages where more serious erosions take place are, Bhagwatpur in Maheshi, Narayanpur, Satom, Partuha in Nauhatta, Topalpur in Supaul, Mokhnaha and Manohar-patti in Marauna, Bella, Baharia, Mangharin in Nirmali Anchals.

When the discharge of flood is below 2 lakh cusecs, the late flooded zones are not flooded at all. The flood visits this area when the discharge is 3 lakh cusecs and above but the flood water recedes in 24 hours. Those places where flood does visit, when the discharge is below 4 lakh cusecs, is full of *kans* and *pater*. The soil of most of the lands in this category is good. The approximate area in this zone is about 2 lakh acres. In this area half of Maheshi, Nauhatta, one-fourth of Supaul, whole of Kishanpur, half of Nirmali and Birpur Anchals come within this zone.

In Kosi embanked area large quantity of sand comes with flood. The problem of the deposit of sand within the embankments is being studied by the Kosi Project. It is their finding that on an average one lakh acre foot of sand is being brought and deposited by the river in its basin and as such a very large quantity of land is being damaged by the sand deposit every year. The sandy land has been further classified into four categories.

(*i*) *Land having 0′ to 3′ sand.*—The cultivation of *munj* (*Saccarem munj*) has been found successful in late flooded areas. In early flooded zones it has failed. Now planting season is being changed from January to February to October to November. Thus this land could be utilised by *munj* cultivation. *Mothi* is also being tried and it has been successful in early flooded zones when planted in August and September.

(*ii*) *Land having 0′ to 9′ sand and below good soil.*—This type of land is found in large areas both in early and late flooded zones. Castor, *palwal* and melon cultivation was tried to utilise this land. Castor has not done well. *Palwal* and melon have done well in late and early flooded zones respectively. *Palwal* has given good result early in late flooded zones. Experiments are still going on as how to utilise this type of land in better way.

(*iii*) *Land having 0′ to 9′ good soil below sand.*—Wheat, barley and maize are not doing well in this land. Cultivation of *moong*, *cheena*, *cheena* peas, *tori*, linseed and *masoor* have been tried and found successful. Paddy and jute are also doing well.

(*iv*) *Land having maximum per cent of sand and less of silt.*—To utilise this type of land cultivation of *sabai* grass, *mothi*, *mesta*, jute, *moong*, *rahar*, paddy and jute were tried and found moderately

successful. Paddy and jute are doing well only in early flooded zones and the other crops in late flooded zones. Groundnut, turmeric, ginger, *kanda* and *sanai* are also being tried.

(*a*) *Land covered with water whole year round.*—In late flooded zones where risk of sand deposit is less, cultivation of water berries like *makhana* and *singhara* have been proposed. No trial has yet been done. Where water comes to 2′ depth, transplanting of deep water paddy in April has been found successful.

(*b*) *Land having water early and remaining up to November.*—Flood resistant paddy B.R. 14, *Dhesaria*, *Singera* and *Bardper* mixed with maize and *moong* have done fairly well.

(*c*) *Cultivable waste land under* kans *and* pater.—Large tracts in flooded zones have gone waste because of a luxuriant growth of *kans* and *pater*. The approximate area were 18,000 acres during 1961-62. About 14,000 acres of such lands have been reclaimed.

(*d*) *Marshy and moist lands.*—Cultivation of *mothi* and *bet* (canes) is being tried for such lands.

Damage to hot weather crops by flood.

Floods in the early flooded zones damage the hot weather crops. During 1961-62 the channels were flooded by Kosi Project authorities and a good percentage of the hot weather crops were saved. This may be continued.

Better cultivation for better type of land.

It is estimated that there are about 67,000 acres of good cultivable lands within the Kosi embanked area. Better seeds, manures, fertilizers and scientific cropping pattern will be useful for getting higher yield.

CROPPING PATTERN OUTSIDE THE EMBANKMENTS.

The following table shows the existing cropping pattern of Saharsa district (outside the embankments) which is generally followed.—

Serial no.	Type of land	Type of soil.	Cropping pattern. Hot weather	*Kharif.*	*Rabi.*
1	2	3	4	5	6
1	Upland .	Sandy loam	Nil ..	*Mesta*, jute or *marua*.	*Mesta* or jute for seed, *kulthi* or *urd*.
2	Upland ..	Good soil	Nil ..	Maize or jute	Mustard or barley or wheat.
3	Medium land ..	0′ to 1′ good soil below sand.	*Moong* or fallow.	Paddy or *aus* paddy.	*Paira*, *khesari*, *kulthi*.
4	Medium land ..	Good land	Maize or jute	Paddy	*Paira* or barley.
5	Medium land .	Good land	Fallow	Paddy	*Paira*.
6	Lowland ..	Good land	(*a*) Maize, *moong* or paddy.	Paddy	Fallow.
			(*b*) Jute	Paddy	Fallow.

Plant Protection.

There are various pests and diseases of the crops like paddy wheat, maize, jute, etc. Various types of plant protection measures are taken to save the crops. The District Agriculture Officer has the responsibility to see that effective steps are taken.

Animal Husbandry and Fisheries.

The following table indicates the livestock population from 1920 onwards:—

Year.	Cattle	Buffaloes.	Sheep.	Goats.	Pigs.	Fowls.	Ducks.
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
1920 ..	1,142,395	204,638	25,351	125,383	Not available.	Not available.	Not available.
1925 ..	1,143.267	213,071	25,535	372,363	,,	,,	,,
1930 ..	1,166.538	242.201	27,204	282,329	,,	,,	,,
1940 ..	1,080,606	221,506	25.709	277,435	16,189	,,	,,
1945 .	916,157	209,644	17,724	179,344	11,749	123,992	5,510
1951*..	1,331.600	245,107	30.395	344,090	18,381	170,246	8,067

The figures of 1940 and 1945, showing a decrease under each of the heads, are easily explained by the heavy drain of livestock due to the exigencies of the Second World War. But a marked increase is noticed in the animal wealth of the district when the figures of 1951 are compared with that of 1945.

The following statement shows the figures of the cattle census in the last two consecutive quinquennial census and their variation in terms of percentage in the district†:—

Item.	Figures of 1961 census.	Figures of 1956 census.	Increase (+) or decrease (–) in percentage.
Cattle male	347,902	286,718	+21.3%
Cattle female	241,218	240,859	+15%
Young stock	274.994	226,453	+21.4%
Total cattle	864,114	754,030	+14.6%
Buffaloes male	2,576	3,887	–33.9%
Buffaloes female	99,768	96,358	+3.5%
Young stock	76,554	68,849	+11.2%
Total Buffaloes	178.898	169,094	+5.8%
Sheep	4,648	9,464	–50.9%
Goats	251,311	170,706	+47.2%
Horses and Ponies	18,883	14,547	+29.8%
Other livestock	9,194	5,467	+68.2%
Total livestock	1,327,048	1,123,308	+18.1%
Poultry	156,773	93,991	+66.8%

* Figures up to 1951 cover both Bhagalpur and Saharsa district (*District Census Handbook of Saharsa*, 1951, pp. 94-95). Later figures are for Saharsa district excluding Bhagalpur.

† Supplied by the District Statistical Office, Saharsa.

The table below mentions the approximate turnover of cattle that come for sale to the two important cattle fairs of the district:—

Name of the fairs.	Period.	Approximate number of animals and cattle.
Singheshwar Sthan ..	February to March (15 days on the eve of *Shivaratri*).	About 2,000 (only elephants and horses).
Supaul	Ten days from 26th January.	About 5,000.

Measures to improve the quality of breeds of animals under the Animal Husbandry Department.

Efforts are being made by the Animal Husbandry Department to improve the breeds. The following schemes are functioning in the district for the improvement of cattle:—

(*i*) Distribution of pedigree bulls;

(*ii*) Artificial Insemination Centres;

(*iii*) Fodder Development;

(*iv*) Disease Control; and

(*v*) Opening of hospitals and dispensaries.

Distribution of approved bulls.—There is a scheme for the distribution of pedigree bulls in National Extension Service Blocks and rural areas to upgrade the local cattle. Under this scheme bulls are distributed in the Community Development Blocks.

Artificial Insemination Centres.—There are altogether nine Artificial Insemination Centres with 19 sub-centres functioning in the district. Such centres are located at Alamnagar, Chhatapur, Madhepura, Raghopur, Saharsa, Sonbarsa, Supaul, Tribeniganj and Uda Kishanganj.

Fodder crop and fodder development.—The area of the district may be viewed into two parts due to Kosi embankments—(*i*) within the embankments and (*ii*) outside the embankments. The position of pasture within the embankments during the summer season is satisfactory because adequate quantity of *dub*, *larkuch*, *bansil*, *danti* and *harrha* grasses are available for the cattle. During winter only *khesari* sown by the cultivators for human use somewhat serves the purpose of fodder also. Besides *meth*, *moong*, maize and *goar* are also sown by the cultivators which serve as cattle feed.

During rainy season the areas within the embankments are flooded with Kosi water. Outside the embankment area grasses are available for grazing during winter and rainy seasons.

The soil of the district is suitable for fodder crops like napier, para and *goar*. Berseem and lucerne grasses do not grow well as the soil is not suitable. *Larkach*, *bansil*, *dapti*, *emmh* and *harrha* which are local species of grass grow abundantly within the embankments during the summer season and they serve the purpose of pasture.

Disease Control.

The diseases from which the animals generally suffer from are rinderpest, haemorrhage septicaemia, anthrax, black quarter, foot and mouth diseases. Rinderpest was quite acute prior to 1957. In 1957 the Rinderpest Eradication Scheme was introduced and by 1958 it was well controlled. Since 1959 there has been no outbreak of rinderpest in the district but the vaccination against rinderpest is being carried on as follow-up programme (June, 1963).

The Animal Husbandry Department deals both with the prevention and treatment of the diseases. Cattle are medically treated wherever possible. Mass inoculation is done in the affected areas and mass vaccination is done in the endemic areas against contagious diseases.

Opening of Veterinary Hospitals and Dispensaries.

In Saharsa district, there are one District Veterinary Hospital at Saharsa, two Subdivisional Veterinary Hospitals (one in each subdivision—Supaul and Madhepura), 21 Class I Dispensaries and one Mobile Dispensary.

The Veterinary dispensaries are located at Alamnagar, Bangaon, Basantpur, Chausa, Chhatapur, Kishanpur, Kumarkhand, Kunauli, Maheshi, Marauna, Murliganj, Nauhatta, Nirmali, Pipra, Pratapganj, Raghopur, Saurbazar, Singheshwar, Sonbarsa, Tribeniganj and Uda Kishanganj.

Dairy farming.

Mostly Goalas or Yadavas, who are professional cowherds, keep herds of cows and buffaloes and trade in cow and buffalo milk. There are six privately managed *goshalas* located at Saharsa, Madhepura, Murliganj, Sonbarsa, Puraini and Nirmali. At these *goshalas* cows are maintained but the standard of maintenance is poor. *Gosadans* are meant for housing decrepit, uneconomic and useless cattle. There is one *gosadan* at Nirmali maintained by Darbhanga Goshala Society and subsidy is given by the Animal Husbandry Department, Saharsa at the rate of Rs. 1.50 only per cattle per month.

Out of six *goshalas* three, i.e., Saharsa, Madhepura and Murliganj have been taken up under development scheme by the Animal Husbandry Department. Hariana bulls and cows have been supplied by the Government to these *goshalas*. The supply of milk from these *goshalas* is inadequate.

It is important to mention that although the density of buffaloes and cows is high in the district, the average yield of milk per day is rather poor. On an average a buffalo gives 2 seers of milk and a cow one seer of milk per day. This is in great contrast to what a good buffalo or a cow can give.

It is estimated that approximately 10.12 lakh maunds of buffalo milk and 10.97 lakh maunds of cow milk is annually available in the district. Most of the milk is consumed as milk or its products within the district itself. About 20 per cent of the milk is converted into cream through cream separators. These separators separate cream from milk by manual process. A large quantity of cream is exported daily out of Saharsa. Milk is generally sold at 2 seers per rupee in different parts of the district while in Nirmali area it is sold at 3 seers per rupee.

Poultry Farming.

In this district one Poultry Development Centre at the district headquarters Saharsa and two Hatching Centres one at Kahara and the other at Birpur are encouraging development of poultry. Not much progress is reported in the last few years.

Fisheries.

Saharsa district is rich in natural resources for pisciculture. It is full of tanks, ponds, *jheels* and big reservoirs but they are mostly full of silt and weeds. Before the Kosi was embanked its water used to spill and with it millions of tiny fry used to fill up these water pools. The people of Saharsa got used to plenty of fish almost at no cost. But now when the Kosi has been embanked, the position has changed.

All the species of fresh water fish are found *Rehu, Catla, Mrigal, Boal, Tengra, Moi, Kabai, Mangur, Singhi, Saura,* etc., are the main species available.

Almost the whole quantity of the catch is consumed within the district and a very small quantity is exported. About 15,000 maunds of fish is reported to be annually exported to Calcutta area.

The State Fisheries Department have now drawn out a detailed programme for fish cultivation on a better and wider range. Spawn is collected from Sahebganj (Santal Parganas district) and distributed. About 200 tanks in the district get spawn.

The Department of Agriculture has started fry distribution centres in this district. But the water pools have to be renovated. Water hyacinth and other weeds continue to choke the water pools. The Department has also encouraged the people to take up paddy-*cum*-fish culture. This has not met with much success yet.

Various types of nets, large and small are used. The fishermen also use light boats for catching fish. The economic condition of the fishermen is not good. The catch of fish at the moment is rather insufficient to meet the demands of internal consumption and export.

FORESTRY.

This sub-section has been discussed in the text on 'General'.

STATE ASSISTANCE TO AGRICULTURE.

This sub-section also has been discussed elsewhere in the text on "Banking, Trade and Commerce".

AGRICULTURAL POTENTIALITIES.

The *per capita* allotment of land per man is much less than an acre. If, therefore, the manpower is properly organised, trained and put to intensify agriculture and particularly horticulture there is no reason why much more could not be taken out of the land without impairing it. Experiments at random at different places in the district have shown that 50 to 60 maunds of paddy with 25 to 30 maunds of other crops before or after paddy can be got out of an acre of land with proper cultivation and this alone should be able to give nearly Rs. 1,000 per acre. Then there is the cultivation of potato, onions, vegetables, sugarcane and other cash crops which can easily fetch two to three thousand rupees per acre.

There is evidently a potentiality of at least one thousand rupees per acre net against the Rs. 100 per acre that the district is perhaps getting at present. This, however, cannot be got very easily. As the district is going to be irrigated by Kosi Canal System the potentiality of growing three crops in a year from a particular field would be possible and the district will again be a granary of Bihar.

Towards this end, it can strongly be suggested, that co-operative efforts must be made and of this co-operative joint farming is believed to be the soundest effort.

FLOODS, FAMINES AND DROUGHTS.

The *District Gazetteer of Bhagalpur* (1911) and the revised *District Gazetteer of Bhagalpur* (1962) have ample reference to the floods. famines and scarcity in Saharsa area. Saharsa consisting of Supaul and Madhepura subdivisions formed a part of Bhagalpur district till 1944 when it became a sub-district and a full-fledged district from 1954.

The first recorded famine and scarcity as mentioned in the *District Gazetteer of Bhagalpur* was in 1866. Failure of crops due to heavy rainfall in July, 1865 resulted in severe distress in 1866. Prices of the essential commodities soared very high. Commonest rice was sold at 11 seers per rupee. Arrangements for gratuitous relief and earthwork to engage labour were made. There are different reports about the mortality statistics. The police had reported 97 deaths due to starvation. Mr. Christian, lessee of the Government Estates in *parganas* Kabkhand and Uttarkhand thought that nearly 2 per cent to 3 per cent of the population had perished from starvation.

Famine of 1874.

Regarding the famine of 1874 the last *District Gazetteer of Bhagalpur* (1911), refers to a minute of Sir Richard Temple, dated 19th February, 1874 which may be perused with interest and need not be quoted and a small portion only is given:—

> "All things considered, I estimate that in *thanas* Supaul and Bangaon 50 per cent. of the population may need assistance in the most distressed half, and 30 per cent. in the other half; that in *thana* Pratapganj, not quite so distressed, there would be 30 per cent.; that in *thana* Madhipura, in one-half badly distressed, there would be 50 per cent, while the other half may escape from distress altogether. This estimate gives a total number of 274,650 persons who might need assistance for three and a half months, from 1st June to 15th September; while half this number might need assistance for April and May, and one quarter of this number for March."

Various relief measures were taken. It is reported that 28,217 persons received gratuitous relief and 16,903 principally women were employed in light labour for which they received full wages in the shape of rice and money. Other relief works were also undertaken to give employment to the able-bodied men. By the 30th July, 1874 signs of a cessation of distress were felt. Till that period 422,577 maunds of rice had been distributed in relief.

Scarcity in 1889.

Deficient rainfall in 1888 led to a considerable failure of crops and distress in 1889. Agricultural loans were distributed to help the people in sowing seeds for the next crops.

Scarcity of 1892.

There was again a scarcity in 1892 in the subdivisions of Supaul and Madhepura due to the scanty rainfall in 1891 and shortfall in produce. Relief works were opened during January. In March the average number on them was 3,494 per day which rose to a maximum of 12,370 in June. Relief works were closed down after June. Over Rs. 37,000 were advanced in loans and the private sources contributed Rs. 47,000 to the relief of this distress.

Famine of 1896-97.

The closing years of the 19th century were also marked by famines of 1896-97. The area particularly affected was again Supaul subdivision. This scarcity was mainly due to general rise in prices consequent upon the widespread failure of crops in Upper India which raised the prices in the locality in sympathy. The winter rice crop in 1895 was quite meagre due to early rains from July till August 20th and there was no rain at all after September 20th. The price of rice rose to 7¾ seers per rupee in June, 1897 and maize to

9½ seers. Relief measures started from January and engaged labour till July. During early May, the average on relief works reached 24,465. It declined thereafter.

More than Rs. 26,000 were distributed in grain or money doles under the provisions of the Indian Famine Fund. The total expenditure incurred was about Rs. 1,64,500 of which Government contributed Rs. 56,400 and the rest by the District Board. The generosity of private sources also gave a lot of relief.

Scarcity in 1902.

There was an apprehension of scarcity in Supaul subdivision in 1902 due to low rainfall and want of proper distribution of rainfall in 1901. Due to the timely action taken by the then Collector, Mr. Shirres, the distress was mitigated.

Floods, 1906—08.

There were exceptionally high floods during August-September, 1906 affecting both Supaul and Madhepura subdivisions. The distress was severe until the waters had subsided. Agricultural loans were freely distributed. The floods, however, left a fertile silt behind and there was an excellent *rabi* crop during the spring of 1907. In 1908 South Bihar suffered very severe scarcity. Supaul and Madhepura had again a taste of very heavy Kosi floods creating havoc. But the receding waters again left good silt and there were good crops of *bhadai* and *aghani* in Madhepura and Supaul subdivisions. Labourers in South Bihar came over to reap the crops and this was some relief in the scarcity conditions of South Bihar.

*Later Scarcities.**

Facts about the later famine, scarcities, floods, etc., in Saharsa district are available in the *Land Revenue Administration Reports of Bhagalpur District from* 1911 to 1953-54 which have been mentioned in the re-written *Bhagalpur Gazetteer* (1962).

The period from 1911 to 1921 was very unsatisfactory from the point of view of agricultural production; famines and scarcities were frequent throughout the decade. During this period crops were good only during 1911, 1916 and 1917 while other years had scarcity and famine. After the good crop of 1916 and 1917, there was the bad year of 1918. This year saw the further westward swing of the river Kosi from the borders of the Purnea district. There was heavy rain and the high flood of the river Kosi devastated most of the portions of Madhepura subdivision. There was also failure of *Hathia* rains which led to distress from June to December 1919. Prices rose in sympathy and the distress of the people immensely increased due to the combined effect of famine, floods, [illegible] (1918) and the World War (1914—18). Distressed persons were given loans and other relief works were opened.

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* Re-written *Bhagalpur Gazetteer* (1962) by P. C. Roy Chaudhury, pp. 335—344, 348—360. Madhepura is also written as Madhipura.

During the period 1920—1929, Madhepura and Supaul subdivisions suffered from floods of the Kosi. The Kosi flood in 1921 damaged the standing crops.

Rainfall was deficient in 1923-24 and a total failure of *Hathia* rains meant a great loss of crops. The incidence of distress was high which was partially solved by the distribution of Agriculturists' Loans.

The heavy Kosi floods in 1927 and later affected the agriculture of the district. The floods during the period 1930-31 had brought devastation to many parts of the district and had started sanding up the fertile tracts. The railway lines used to be frequently breached. Railway communications through Mathahi to Madhepura and between Bhaptiahi and Pratapganj were breached. Agriculturists' Loans, gratuitous relief, opening of test works, etc., had to be resorted to.

In 1934 there was the Great Bihar Earthquake which ruined many houses at Supaul, Panchgachia and Madhepura, etc. Many of the fertile tracts were badly affected. Some of the river beds were raised and a few new channels were revived. Many fertile tracts deteriorated due to the oozing out of sand. The Natural Calamity Act, 1934, was enacted. Under this Act liberal amounts were given as loans and gratuitous relief to persons whose houses and lands were damaged by the earthquake. The non-official agencies fully co-operated with the official agency in fighting the distress.

Due to heavy rains and heavy floods, both the subdivisions of Supaul and Madhepura were badly affected in 1938-39. Kosi river had already become a menace. The railway communications between Mansi and Koparia on the Mansi-Saharsa section of the North-Eastern Railway was suspended and more or less continued to remain so till 1954. There was a failure of the *Hathia* rains which affected the winter crops. A large number of houses had fallen down and Government organised relief measures. House building loans were granted.

In 1939-40 heavy Kosi floods again affected the district and particularly the Supaul subdivision where a large number of houses were damaged. Kosi floods from now on became almost an annual feature seriously affecting the western parts of Supaul and Madhepura subdivisions particularly. There were heavy Kosi floods in 1940-41 and again in 1945. Practically no year was absolutely free from floods and scarcity conditions. The pattern of damage and relief measures were the same as before.

The Kosi flood of 1953-54 was extremely severe and the entire Saharsa district was very badly affected. It was this extremely high flood that underlined the urgency of a permanent measure to stop the almost annual floods of the Kosi. The Kosi Multi-purpose

Project Scheme was the result of a co-ordinated planning at various levels. It may be noted here that since the construction of the Kosi embankments, the flood is expected to be confined only within the two embankments.

Drought and Flood of 1954-55.

During this year there was no rain from February, 1954 to March, 1954, as a result of which the *rabi* crops suffered and preparation of lowlands for *aghani* and *bhadai* crops were delayed. There was incessant rain in the last week of June, 1954 and the first week of July, 1954 followed by heavy Kosi floods which covered 75 per cent of the total area of the district. It caused heavy loss to the crops like maize and jute and it also destroyed the *aghani* crops. There was drought in the later part of the rainy season and the failure of *Hathia* rains resulted in a very poor yield of *aghani* paddy. Relief measures were administered.

Scarcity in 1956-57.

Untimely rain in December, 1956 and January, 1957, destroyed the *bhadai* crops completely which brought misery to the people of the district. The areas under the police-stations, Alamnagar, Chhatapur, Dharhara, Kishanganj, Raghopur, Saharsa, Singheshwar, Sonbarsa and Tribeniganj were much affected. As a result scarcity was declared.

Scarcity in 1957-58.

This year there was an untimely and uneven distribution of rainfall. Lack of rain affected paddy and jute crops while extremely heavy rains during winter destroyed the *rabi* crops. About 75 per cent of *rabi,* 86 per cent of *aghani,* 60 per cent of *bhadai* and 36 per cent of jute crops were lost. There was great scarcity throughout the district and gratuitous relief, etc., had to be given.

The statement below from the *Land Revenue Administration Report* shows the expenditure incurred over the relief measures:—

		Rs.
(*i*)	Gratuitous Relief	3,43,750.00
(*ii*)	Heavy Manual Labour .. .	1.19.000.00
(*iii*)	Light Manual Labour	15,000.00
(*iv*)	Medical and Public Health ..	45,135.00
(*v*)	Maintenance of Communication and Boats, etc.	2.76,857.00
(*vi*)	Maintenance of Motor Boats ..	3,400.00
(*vii*)	Epidemic Grant	3,000.00
(*viii*)	Natural Calamities Loan ..	1,49,945.00
	Total ..	10,56,087.00

Drought and Flood in 1958-59.

The *Land Revenue Administration Report* of this year mentions that for the first nine months of the year the district suffered heavily from drought and floods in the Kosi. The paddy of 1957-58 had completely failed and there was also failure of *rabi* crops. As a result scarcity was declared.

The following chart gives an idea of relief that was given:—

	Particulars.		Number and quantity.	Expenditure.
				Rs.
1.	Number of Fair Price Shops opened	..	849	1,89,263.00
2.	Quantity of foodgrains sold through these shops	..	2,082,298 maunds.	..
3.	Quantity of foodgrains distributed as gratuitous relief		36,910 maunds.	..
4.	Quantity of foodgrains distributed through *Charkha* relief.		31,351 maunds.	..
5.	Number of Hard Manual Labour Schemes taken up	..	1,118	11,75,000.00
6.	Number of Light Manual Labour Centres started		65 with 102 sub-centres.	7,12,258.00
7.	Number of Medical Centres opened ..	..	54	10,000.00
8.	Number of Veterinary Centres ..	..	64	Not available.
9.	Maintenance and repairs of relief and communication boats.		..	2,50,000.00
10.	Maintenance of motor-boats ..	..	..	4,405.00
11.	Epidemic grants .. .	..		3,150.00
12.	Natural Calamities ..	..	..	8,875.00

These relief measures were taken in addition to other resources of employment like construction of P. W. D. roads and repairs of District Board roads. The construction of Kosi Barrage and Embankments also provided good scope of employment to the labourers of the district.

Flood in 1959-60.

In this year the low-lying area of Dharhara *thana* which comprised of the eastern portion of the said *thana* including some of the villages in the west were badly affected by Kosi floods as the flood waters came as early as about first week of May, great damage was done to maize crop over a wide area. Due to incessant rain in last July, maize crop was extensively damaged in *chap* (low) lands of Sonbarsa and Sourbazar police-stations in Sadar subdivision, Bhimnagar and Supaul police-stations in Supaul subdivision and Alamnagar, Kishanganj and portions of Murliganj police-stations in Madhepura subdivision.

The total estimated damage on account of early rains and Kosi floods was approximately 5,00,000 maunds of foodgrains. Approximately 373 villages in the district within a radius of about 280 square miles with a total population of about two lakh souls were affected by the flood.

For relief and rescue work 1,600 boats were arranged out of which about 1,300 were hired for maintaining communications in flood-affected areas and the rest belonged to the Government. A sum of Rs. 14,35,926 was spent over gratuitous relief, casual relief and fire relief to the people. Subsidised shops were also opened.

Forty-seven medical centres including sub-centres were operating in the flood-affected areas.

The statement showing the expenditure incurred under various items of relief is given below:—

			Rs.
1. Gratuitous Relief	..	..	14,35,926.00
2. Light Manual Labour	..	..	1,555.00
3. Hard Manual Labour	..	..	19,421,00
4. Medical Public Health	..	..	20,000.00
5. Boat Grant	..	..	2,55,474.00
6. Motor Boat Grant	..	..	682.00

Flood in 1960-61.

During this year an area of 302 square miles within the embankments were affected by Kosi floods. A total population of 206,933 souls suffered. The Kosi flood had affected mostly the northern and western portions of the district within the embankments. Crops normally grown in this area are early maize, jute and *rabi*. *Bhadai* crops were damaged due to early floods.

Gratuitous relief was given to the tune of Rs. 13,21,674 and 85,431 maunds of foodgrains were distributed amongst the people of the affected areas. Hard and Light Manual Labour Schemes were introduced and Rs. 3,66,683 and Rs. 99,038 respectively were spent. The house building grants to the tune of Rs. 52,773 were distributed among 3,382 persons. Over the medical and public health and veterinary Rs. 199 were spent.

Flood and Natural Calamities of 1961-62.

During the year under review an area of nearly 150 square miles was under flood which affected a total population of 1,25,723 souls. The northern and western parts of the district within the embankments were mostly affected. Another natural calamity was fire as a result of which nearly 3,800 houses were reported to have been damaged. A number of houses were also damaged by cyclone. Suitable house building grants were given.

Gratuitous relief was distributed in the flood and fire-affected areas and a total quantity of 13,214 maunds of foodgrains were distributed amongst the affected people. There was no necessity of taking up Hard and Light Manual Labour Schemes but free house building grants were given. Boats were provided in the flood-affected areas and a sum of Rs. 1,80,712 were spent on hire and maintenance of boats. Fire relief to the tune of Rs. 73,695 was distributed during the year under report.

Flood of 1963.

Flood is an annual feature in Saharsa district and it is now restricted to the areas lying within the two Kosi embankments. There are 224 villages within the Kosi embankments where floods are the normal feature. There are five *anchals,* namely, Supaul, Nirmali, Marauna, Birpur and Kishanpur (Supaul subdivision) and two *Anchals,* namely, Mahisi and Dharhara (Sadar subdivision) where floods occur every year and some villages are always affected.

The river Kosi had started eroding the western embankment from 6th August. 1963. Originally the distance of the river from the embankment was 210 feet. The situation took a serious turn and about half a mile embankment was touched.

The turbulent Kosi was threatening to breach its embankment in village Dalwa in Saptari district of Nepal, about 15 miles away from Birpur the Kosi Project headquarters. The Kosi barrage is located in Nepal territory but both the Kosi barrage and the two embankments are under the management and control of State Government of Bihar.

This year the discharge of Kosi was 2,70,000 cusecs as against 5,71,000 cusecs in 1962. Hence the discharge of flood water was not high and only spilled water about knee-deep could spread up to the embankment and the main volume of water through Sakardahi channel in Nepal flowed into Tiljuga river in Bihar and ultimately into the main Kosi *dhar*.

The flood water entered into Kanauli, Kamalpur and Harpur villages in Saharsa district and Bathnaha village in Purnea district without, however, causing any loss of human and animal life. The crops, however, were damaged to some extent in Saharsa district due to erosion, the details of which are given below:—

	Area completely damaged.	Area partially damaged.	Crop lost in maunds.
	Acres.	Acres.	
1. Supaul *Anchal*	150	60	1,320
2. Kishanpur *Anchal*	165	Nil	1,110
3. Nirmali *Anchal*	76	106	750
4. Marauna *Anchal*	115	265	1,925
5. Birpur *Anchal*	225	530	3,075

It may be noted that though the breach occurred in Dalwa in Nepal, some villages in Saharsa district were also affected.

It was reported that Bhuskaul village in Supaul *Anchal* was completely eroded and the inhabitants were immediately rehabilitated in north of Supaul town and relief was given to the said village along with 13 other villages, namely, Nirmali, Belwa Bhurahi, Jobaha, Ekdara, Piprahi, Kanauli, Kamalpur and Harpur in Marauna *Anchal* and Manoharpatti, Sisouni, Sarounji Koni and Basbitti village in Supaul *Anchal*. All the said villages are located in Saharsa district.

Efforts were made for protecting the embankments. One thousand labourers were working at the erosion site dumping wire-enmeshed boulder to slow down the process of the erosion. The work of the construction of a mile-long ring *bandh* started from 16th August, 1963. Besides, the sinking of about 800 feet of the embankment near the sluice gate between Dalwa and Banerjhula, the ring *bandh* at Dalwa had also been breached at some places but it was not so serious.

Relief operations were immediately launched by the State Government. Tarpolins and tin-sheets were sent to provide shelter. Tube-wells were sunk in the affected villages. A large number of boats were provided for evacuation purposes. A sum of Rs. 42,697 was paid to the *mallahs* who were engaged. For speedy relief operations the entire flooded area of the district was divided into 18 zones and each zone was placed in charge of a gazetted officer.

Gratuitous relief in the shape of grain was distributed. Seven milk centres were opened one each at Birpur, Kishanpur, Marauna, Supaul, Nirmali, Mahisi and Dharhara to supply milk and about 950 persons had been given skimmed milk powder in Marauna and Supaul *Anchals*. Twenty more Fair Price Shops had been opened to cope with the demand of the people in the affected areas. Fifty-six Fair Price Shops had already been functioning in the affected areas.

Ten health centres and sub-centres and ten veterinary centres were opened for preventive and curative work. The wells were disinfected twice and a large number of persons were inoculated and vaccinated. No loss of human or animal life was reported in the affected areas due to erosion.

CHAPTER V.

INDUSTRIES.

The physiographical features and particularly the river system, communications, marketing facilities and other allied features have been described elsewhere. Industrially this district is extremely backward and at the moment there are no large-scale industries at all. There is no mention of Saharsa anywhere in the *Techno-Economic Survey Report of Bihar* (1960) excepting that the percentage of looms in this district is 0.60 in comparison to the total looms of Bihar State.

The table below gives the details of the major livelihood sources of the population according to the 1951 census*:—

Livelihood class.	Persons who derive their principal means of livelihood. 1951	Percentage of the total population. 1951
1. Agricultural classes	1,223,460	93.5%
2. Non-Agricultural classes—		
(a) Production other than cultivation ..	14,594	1.1%
(b) Commerce	33,684	2.6%
(c) Transport	1,375	0.1%
(d) Other services and miscellaneous sources.	35,085	2.7%

Most of the persons engaged in production other than cultivation like village artisans, blacksmiths, carpenters, potters, etc., are scattered all over the rural area. They work mostly with primitive tools. They form only 1 per cent of the total population and there is an acute shortage of skilled and semi-skilled persons. The detailed break-up of employers, employees and independent workers in industries and services in 1951 census is given below†:—

District.	Total.	Employers.	Employees.	Independent workers.
1	2	3	4	5
Saharsa	21,052	1,994	7,461	11,597

* *District Census Handbook of Saharsa* (pp. 7—9) Break-up figures for 1961 census are not yet available.

† *District Census Handbook of Saharsa* (pp. 26—34).

Serial no.	Name of industries.	Total.	Employers.	Employees.	Independent workers.
1	2	3	4	5	6
1	Primary industries not elsewhere specified.	2,179	231	511	1,437
2	Stock raising	1,341	157	309	875
3	Rearing of small animals and insects	280	39	145	96
4	Plantation industries ..	10	Nil	2	8
5	Forestry and wood cuttings ..	233	5	20	208
6	Hunting	2	Nil	Nil	2
7	Fishing	313	30	35	248
8	Mining and quarrying ..	16	Nil	1	15
9	Stone quarrying, clay and sand pits	16	Nil	1	15
10	Processing and manufacture—food-stuffs, textiles, leather and products thereof.	1,172	193	335	644
11	Food industries, otherwise unclassified	34	Nil	Nil	34
12	Vegetable oil and dairy products ..	335	95	88	172
13	Tobacco	154	6	80	68
14	Cotton textiles	4	Nil	Nil	4
15	Wearing apparel	554	88	Nil	313
16	Textile industries	3	Nil	3	Nil.
17	Leather, leather products and footwear	68	4	11	53
18	Processing and manufacture of metals, chemicals and products thereof.	471	55	139	277
19	Manufacture of metal products otherwise unclassified.	471	55	139	277
20	Processing and manufacturing not elsewhere specified.	503	64	116	323
21	Manufacturing industries otherwise unclassified.	74	5	33	36
22	Bricks, tiles and other clay products	272	34	43	195
23	Wood and wood products other than furniture.	157	25	40	92
24	Construction and utilities ..	3,485	257	2,063	895
25	Construction and maintenance of work otherwise unclassified.	189	11	9	169
26	Construction and maintenance of buildings	1.716	104	1,222	390
27	Construction and maintenance of roads, bridges and other transport works	1.567	142	1,099	326
28	Sanitary works and services (including scavengers).	13	Nil	3	10

The statistics of the table indicate the nature of the primary industries like stock raising, processing of foodstuffs, leather work, etc. They are all to be grouped as cottage industries. As the district has been given its present status recently, a large number of

construction works have been taken up and engage a few thousands of men. The Kosi barrage, the Government buildings, scattered throughout the district, etc., are some of the main units employing the masons, labourers, carpenters, etc.

It has been mentioned that the district suffers from bad communications. Both the railways and roadways give poor amenities and it takes more than 12 hours to reach Bhagalpur, the divisional headquarters from Saharsa. The time taken to reach Katihar is also about 8 to 10 hours. The raw materials have to be brought from these stations and there are poor transport facilities. The district has no provision for the supply of hydro-electric power. The two power supply units at Saharsa and Birpur have got very limited capacity. Birpur Power House is only meant for Kosi Project. The Saharsa Power House supplies electricity to Saharsa, Madhipura, Singheshwarasthan and Murliganj. The electricity tariff is considered quite high both for domestic and industrial consumption. There is a proposal for procuring power from Barauni Thermal Station when it is ready. The transmission line has already been laid from Barauni to Mansi. It is expected that after power is available from Barauni Thermal Station, there will be more power available in Saharsa district.

The financial resources of the people are also very limited. An enquiry was conducted by the Economic Investigation Branch of the Small Industries Service Institute, New Delhi, in 1961 and it was held that there were only about 200 people who could invest funds to the extent of Rs. 20,000 to Rs. 50,000 each in starting industries. This shows a poor incidence of financial resources within the district. The institutional sources which provided funds to the district have not yet had much development. The Central Co-operative Bank, the Khadi and Village Industrial Board and the Industries Department have given some loans for starting or improving cottage industries. The Industries Department has advanced till 1963 Rs. 1,78,801 to 169 units under State Aid to Industries Act. The discussions in the text on Banking, Trade and Commerce in this connection may be looked into. Marketing facilities are also poor owing to bad communications and other factors.

CURRENT INDUSTRIES.

There are no mining and heavy industries nor any large-scale industries in this district. The few industries are on a small scale and as mentioned, usually of cottage type.

Amongst small industries a Bone Mill at Saharsa, units for blacksmithy, manufacture for sheet metal work, ordinary agricultural implements, domestic utensils and carpentry may be mentioned.

There is a Bone Mill in Saharsa established in 1957 and the unit has received a loan of Rs. 20,000 from the State Government during 1961-62. The mill has not yet gone into any tangible production. It is estimated that about 70,000 maunds of bones are annually available within the district, the bulk of which is exported to Calcutta. There is the possibility of the mill flourishing if properly managed. Blacksmithy is scattered throughout the district. It is estimated that during 1962-63 there were 2,000 blacksmithy units employing about 4,000 workers. Non-availability of coal and scarcity of proper raw materials are the handicaps. There are a few very small sheet metal works units at Saharsa, Murliganj and Uda-Kishanganj. Quarterly quota of G. I. sheets and black sheets are made available to these units which are registered. Some of the units have got loans from the Industries Department under the State Aid to Industries Act. There is a great scope for expansion of these industries provided the raw materials are available.

There is one Khandsari Sugar Manufacturing unit at Uda-Kishanganj. In 1962-63 about 235 persons were employed. The unit has the capacity to crush about 2.5 lakh maunds of sugarcane and produce 10,000 maunds of sugar. There is a growing demand for Khandsari sugar and this industry has got a future.

No particular mention need be made of scattered small units in connection with *biri* industries, carpentry, making of lac bangles and leather work. They are all more or less in a primitive state.

There are three rice mills located at Nirmali, Saharsa and Supaul. The number of labourers employed during seasons is much less 100 persons. Oil crushing section is attached to these rice mills. Due to shortage of paddy the rice mills remain idle for a considerable part of the year.

Industrial Potential and Plans for Future Development.

As mentioned earlier, the district has very meagre resources which can form basis for industrial development. Communication facilities are also poor. The district has no railway in the northern and north-western part and the mileage of all-weather road is also very poor. Flood inundation had become a nightmare.

With the completion of the Kosi Canal System more supply of foodgrains are expected to be secured. More power is expected to be available from Barauni Thermal Station from 1965. There is some scope for setting up a number of new industries on a moderate scale if proper facilities are available. Some of these industrial ventures would cover the manufacture of agricultural implements and handtools, builders' hardware, manufacture of rickshaws, etc. In a similar manner the possibility of canning mangoes which are

available in plenty may be examined. Units for cremary, jute twine and bakery are also expected to thrive. There is no ice factory now in the district.

The only large-scale industry, the possibility of which may be examined is for the manufacture of paper. Bamboo is widely grown and according to the estimate about 50,000 acres of land is under bamboo. Titagarh Paper Mills of Calcutta procure some of the supply from this district. There is no dearth of water. More power will be available from Barauni Thermal Station. Jute sticks are also available for making pulp for the manufacture of paper. Apart from bamboo, the suitability of *pater* growing abundantly in the district for the manufacture of paper may be examined.

CHAPTER VI.

BANKING, TRADE AND COMMERCE.

INDIGENOUS BANKING.

Saharsa district has long been a serious victim of the ravages of the river Kosi. Cultivators and villagers have remained hard pressed for finance. A remarkable feature of the district is the existence of some very big cultivators, though small in number. These cultivators with hundreds of acres of land have been not only supporting themselves but to a great extent investing their capital in lending to needy persons. Every village has had the privilege of getting financial aid from the professional *mahajan* or *sahukar*. The *mahajan* was generally unlicensed and used to lend money on sufficiently high rate of interest to the poor cultivators, landless labourers and even middle class families. The security of their loan mostly was house, landed property, ornaments, utensils, cattle, etc. From investigation it appears that a portion of the borrowers could not repay the principal and interest in time for which they were victimised intolerably. Their lands, properties both movable and immovable were auctioned. *Mahajans* were more brutal than the landlords. Another source of financial aid was the *zamindars*. The tenants used to come to the *zamindars* for help, either in form of charity or loan, for meeting the expenses of *sradh* or daughter's marriage or even for paying the rent dues. Moneyed *zamindars* used to help their tenant-borrowers and would give abundant time to repay the loans. In the villages the grocers also practised money-lending business on a large scale. On the eve of putting in seedlings they used to give loans to the needy farmers very pleasantly but the method of recovery was very tough. Large part of the produce of land usually went into their pockets by way of recovery of the interest and the principal. The grocer's business was a net which entangled the farmers and ultimately ruined them. These *sahukars* or grocers would not only lend money but also seeds and consumable grains on the firm condition that they would be recovered just after harvesting. The villagers, with no alternative source of repayment, were forced to mortgage their landed property or the future crops for getting loans.

It appears from the records that there were a few indigo planters in villages like Simrahi, Bhatania, etc., who also gave loans particularly to their indigo growers. The tenants were also given various kinds of loans by the Government. The difficulty of communications and particularly the distance of Bhagalpur, till 1944

when Saharsa became a sub-district, however, worked as a handicap. Co-operative Credit Societies, *taccavi* loans, rent remissions and gratuitous relief were being given to the villagers.

The rate of interest varied. For petty loans where the borrowers pledged some articles such as ornaments and household effects like utensils, the rate was about half an anna in a rupee per mensem or 37½ per cent per annum. The rate of interest was somewhat smaller if lands were pledged. Usufructuary mortgage of land where the lender enjoyed the benefits of the land till repayment was made had lower interest. Any analysis of the village credit will show that the *mahajan* has still remained the largest source of credit in spite of the co-operative societies and other Government agencies.

This is partially due to the fact that no Government agency will give credit without certain formalities being observed and the financial stability of the party will always be enquired into. There was also some unavoidable delay in getting credit from the Government agencies. The village *mahajan* would give credit quickly and without much formality. Details have been discussed elsewhere. Indigenous banking was practically reduced to only one aspect of banking function namely, giving credit. The other function of credit savings hardly existed in the rural areas. The *zamindars* as an agency of indigenous banking have disappeared with the abolition of *zamindari*.

So far as the urban areas are concerned, there are some *gaddis* of important commercial houses. There are some Marwaris, grocers and Maithil Brahmans who practise money-lending. They, however, do not give loans to the general public but advance credits to their own small traders or dealers on the security of their business and capital.

General Credit Facilities, Indeptednfss and Money-lenders.

There has not been any critical survey as to the actual incidence of rural or urban indebtedness in Saharsa district. Generally it may, however, be said that indebtedness is almost a normal feature in the economy of the average family of the common man and the middle classes Kosi had ruined many affluent families, large cultivators and small *zamindars*. Landless labourers, however, quickly emigrated but the love of hearth and home kept back the people who had even small bits of land. At the top of losing much of their lands and their produce due to the Kosi floods the people were mostly afflicted with various diseases like malaria, *kala-azar*. hookworm, bowel-troubles and goitre. The Kosi ravages, as repeated elsewhere, had literally broken the back of the people of all classes in some way or other.

Strangely enough indebtedness in this district is also largely due to concepts of social obligations and standards. The aristocratic *zamindar* families lived up to their old tradition of hospitality, spending large amount over marriages, *sradhs*, sports, music, etc. They also supported education, and other fine arts. They also loved litigations. The earthquake of 1934 demolished many of their large mansions. The abolition of *zamindari* filled up their cup of misery and most of their families are now burdened with indebtedness.

The traditional joint family system and the lop-sided family budget of the middle classes coupled with no family control are some of the reasons for chronic indebtedness of the middle classes and the lower middle classes. The labouring classes are not very active and are averse to manual labour. The recent Kosi Project was largely possible because of the imported labour.

The chances of savings with others excepting business classes are rather remote. This is in contrast with the business classes who have much more chances for savings. In the recent years several places like Murliganj, Nirmali, Bihariganj and Supaul have had spurt of trade and commerce. The businessmen at these places have been making good profits.

General credit facilities available are from the professional money-lenders, large cultivators and affluent *zamindars*, richer relatives, tradesmen and lastly from the State and the State-sponsored agencies like the co-operative societies, etc. Banks are also another agency for giving credit.

The money-lender is the main agency for credit. He allows credit quickly and even higher rate of interest is resorted to because of the want of formalities which are essential with the other agencies and particularly the agencies sponsored by the Government. The money-lender will take more risk and will be more ruthless in realising his dues. About 70 per cent of the total credits of the district are from the money-lenders.

The large cultivators, *zamindars*, richer relatives and traders are definitely more shy in giving credit and will insist on mortgages of movable or immovable property. Their rate of interest is often higher than the rate of interest that appears on the credit-note. The State insists on financial stability and a lot of formalities to be gone through before any land improvement or agriculturists' loans could be obtained Owing to the difficulty of communications a borrower would rather avoid several trips to the headquarters before he could get a loan. Nevertheless, because of the Kosi ravages the credit supplied by the State Government is very large.

Banks are of recent growth in this district, and they have not yet become very popular with the common man. Co-operative Banks and Land Mortgage Banks have not had much of success in the district. It is a notorious fact that the private money-lender is a very necessary institution in the economy of the district in spite of some of the evils that are associated with it.

The State have passed the Money-lenders Act in 1938 to give relief to the borrowers. Under this Act the money-lender has to register himself, obtain a licence and maintain regular account of each loan which is liable to be checked up. The rate of interest has also been fixed. Compound interest has been prohibited. For secured loan the rate is 9 per cent per annum and for unsecured loan the rate is 12 per cent per annum. It is not impossible that the money-lenders may not be implementing their obligations fully and that there are still many unregistered money-lenders. The fact, however, remains that without a necessity there would not have been unscrupulous money-lenders, registered or unregistered.

The tables following indicate the working of the Bihar Money-Lenders Act in this district from 1956-57 to 1961-62:—

Statement showing the yearwise number of licences registered for the first time, number of licences at the end of the year and the amount of loan advanced under the Bihar Money Lenders Act in the district of Saharsa from 1956-57 to 1961-62.*

Year.	Number of licences registered for the first time during the year.		Number of licences in force at the end of the year.		Amount of loan advanced.			
					With security.		Without security.	
	Urban.	Rural.	Urban.	Rural.	Urban.	Rural.	Urban.	Rural.
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
					Rs.	Rs.	Rs.	Rs.
1956-57 ..	2	70	47	621	14,999.00	17,60,757.00	Nil	2,098.00
1957-58 ..	9	105	51	732	500.00	22,60,816.00	Nil	1,90,145.00
1958-59 ..	19	106	73	829	65,798.00	21,04,175.00	Nil	1,200.00
1959-60 ..	Not available.	Not available.	Not available.	Not available.	Not available.	Not available.	Not available.	Not available.
1960-61 ..	20	125	61	793	Nil	15,18,432.00	15,24,573.00	1,18,200.00
1961-62 ..	19	271	969	Nil	16,705.00	23,69,063.00	34,999.00	1,75,599.00

**District Statistical Handbook of Saharsa*, 1961-62 (under print).

The table below shows the names of the persons and firms carrying on money-lending business from Rs 20,000.00 and above from the year 1958-59 to 1961-62*:—

Year	Names of families and firms.	Places and their branches where business was carried on.	Amount of business.	Date on which the present registration certificate granted.
1	2	3	4	5
			Rs.	
1958-59 ..	.. M/s. Gouri Shanker Rice and Oil Mills, Saharsa.	Saharsa ..	.. No limit ..	5th March 1959.
1959-60 ..	.. Mahabir Jha, son of Kashi Nath Jha.	Sahaul *Tola* Bariban, P. O. Sahsaul P.-S. Saharsa, district Saharsa.	25,000.00	11th December 1959.
1960-61 ..	.. Chandra Kumar Singh, son of Janak Prasad Singh.	Logma, P. O. and P.-S. Sonbarsa, district Saharsa.	20,000.00	3rd January 1961.
	Rameshwar Lal Khandelwal, son of Munna Lal.	Saharsa town, Saharsa ..	Any sum above Rs. 9,999.00	17th January 1961.
1961-62 ..	.. M/s. Harchand Rai Banshidhar of Saharsa through on the partner Sri Madan Lal Bhimseria of Saharsa.	Saharsa ..	.. Any sum above Rs. 9,999.00	25th April 1961.
	Dina Nath Jha, son of Chamak Lal Jha	Pam Kalan, P.O. Pama, P. S. Saur Bazar, district Saharsa.	25,000.00	28th June 1961.

*Source.—Registration Office Saharsa.

Land is usually sold or mortgaged when money is badly required. The figures of such transfers will also be helpful in assessing the indebtedness of the district.

Statement showing the yearwise number, etc. in respect of raiyati *holdings having occupancy rights transferred by deeds of sale in the district of Saharsa from* 1956-57 *to* 1961-62*.

Year.	Number of registration office.	Entire.				In part.			
		Number.	Area transferred in acres.	Annual rent in rupees.	Consideration money in rupees.	Number.	Area transferred in acres.	Annual rent in rupees.	Consideration money in rupees.
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
1956-57 ..	12	4,738	3,018.42	10,062.93	7,11,514.00	73,017	31,454.16	47,714.61	66,74,662.00
1957-58 ..	15	4,970	4,933.73	9,851.77	4,92,357.22	24,192	1,65,931.09	48,424.97	2,55,83,177.59
1958-59 ..	15	4,399	4,854.50	9,109.76	3,63,859.00	19,648	23,897.75	30,232.74	66,72,285.00
1959-60 ..	15	4.060	5,444.52	7,863.36	10,84.061.00	18,974	21.530.97	26,832.03	74,05,434.00
1960-61 ..	15	4,114	5,478.01	7,358.79	8,03,600.04	28,072	24,229.75	34,985.16	15,959,159.00
1961-62 ..	15	4,439	4,501.68	8,183.94	12,09,847.38	25,405	24,167.52	43,985.18	9,167,834.17

**District Statistical Handbook of Saharsa* 1961 62 (under print).

Statement showing yearwise registrations affecting movable and immovable properties in the district of Saharsa from 1956-57 to 1961-62:*

Year.	Number of registration office.	Registration affecting immovable property.			Total registration of movable property.			Wills including cancellation.	
		Number.	Aggregate value in rupees.	Fees in rupees.	Number.	Aggregate value in rupees.	Fees in rupees.	Number.	Fees in rupees.
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
1956-57 ..	12	33,718	1,06,23,476.00	1,58,155.86	425	1,97,290.00	994.99	18	262.68
1957-58 ..	15	42,542	1,54,23,610.50	5,57,807.34	247	1,41,181.00	844.44	23	312.81
1958-59 ..	15	39,817	1,45,67,140.12	3,06,219.65	258	1,51,499.00	900.44	11	312.81
1959-60 ..	15	35,684	1,35,94,294.00	1,71,071.34	210	1,64,429.19	839.04	24	354.33
1960-61 ..	15	45,719	2,36,33,238.00	2,27,732.16	302	2,02,120.00	765.89	42	621.15
1961-62 ..	15	48,187	2,69,52,070.00	2,66,726.55	200	1,29,299.00	935.16	36	531.09

**District Statistical Handbook of Saharsa*, 1961-62 (under print).

The trend of State assistance taken by the people also indicates the state of indebtedness. The tables show the amount disbursed under the Land Improvement Loans Act, 1883 and Agriculturist Loans Act, 1884 from 1954-55 to 1961-62.

(*a*) *Yearwise break up figures of loans advanced under the Land Improvement Loans Act,* 1883 *from* 1954-55 *to* 1961-62*.

Year.	Total amount advanced in the preceding year.	Total amount advanced during the year.	Total.	Total amount realised during the year.	Balance at the close of the year.
1	2	3	4	5	6
	Rs.	Rs.	Rs.	Rs.	Rs.
1954-55 ..	33,29,603	3,96,613	37,26,216	21,167	37,05,049
1955-56 ..	37,05,049	2,84,196	39,89,245	45,241	3,94,44,005
1956-57 ..	3,94,44,005	1,45,000	40,89,005	1,50,958	39,38,046
1957-58 ..	39,38,046	1,35,000	40,73,046	3,52,926	37,20,120
1958-59 ..	37,20,120	1,70,000	38,70,120	29,750	38,40,370
1959-60 ..	38,40,370	13,669	38,54,039	1,18,590	37,35,530
1960-61 ..	37,35,530	10,048	37,45,578	1,18,509	37,27,069
1961-62 ..	37,27,069	76,500	37,27,834	37,471	36,90,563

(*b*) *Yearwise break up figures of loans advanced under the Agriculturist Loans Act,* 1884 *from* 1954-55 *to* 1961-62*.

Year.	Total amount advanced in the preceding year.	Total amount advanced during the year.	Total.	Total amount realised during the year.	Balance at the close of the year.
1	2	3	4	5	6
	Rs.	Rs.	Rs.	Rs.	Rs.
1954-55 ..	35,42,488	52,39,990	88,42,478	87,912	87,54,566
1955-56 ..	87,54,566	15,50,000	93,04,566	2,38,467	90,66,099
1956-57 ..	90,66,999	4,25,750	94,91,849	3,06,669	91,85,180
1957-58 ..	91,85,180	13,46,590	1,05,31,770	16,47,097	88,84,673
1958-59 ..	88,84,673	71,595	89,56,268	64,241	88,92,028
1959-60 ..	88,92,028	8,96,900	97,88,928	6,67,534	91,21,394
1960-61 ..	91,21,394	8,97,900	1,10,19,294	7,21,908	1,02,97,386
1961-62 ..	1,02,97,386	55,825	1,03,53,211	2,25,817	1,01,27,394

*SOURCE.—The figures have been supplied by the Revenue Section of the Saharsa Collectorate.

STATE ASSISTANCE TO INDUSTRIAL DEVELOPMENT.

With the passing of the Bihar State Aid to Industries Act, 1956, Government have been able to grant loans and other technical help to the persons carrying on or intending to start industries within the State. This aid is expected to give an encouragement to the growth of small-scale and cottage industries in the district of Saharsa.

From 1957-58 to 1961-62 a sum of Rs. 2,48,594 has been advanced to 274 persons for the development of certain industries. These industries include the manufacture of agricultural implements, automobile and motor works, blacksmithy and trunk factory, bone crushing, brick kiln and chimney, cabinet making, distilled water, sewing industry, manufacture of soda water, etc.

M|s. Bihar Bone Crushing Mills has been advanced a loan of Rs. 20,000 for setting up a Bone Crushing Factory at Saharsa. M|s. Raj Kamal Press of Madhepura has been given a loan of Rs. 5,500 for the development of the Press. In Madhepura a party has been given an advance of Rs. 5,000 for the manufacture of soda water while another man has been given an advance of Rs. 6,000 for the preparation of distilled water. A woman of Kapasia has been given an advance of Rs. 5,000 for brick making industry. In Madhepura an advance of Rs. 5,000 for establishing a wire and nail factory was made. A sum of Rs. 9,000 has been given to the owner of a cabinet works at Saharsa for the development of the unit.

No appraisal was made if the money has been properly utilised. It is a common complaint that it has not been utilised and much of the money advanced is being misused. It is also an unfortunate fact that the loan money is not being returned according to the terms. Out of the loan of Rs. 2,48,594 only a sum of Rs. 53,875 has been realised till 1962-63. The impact of such advances for industrial development of the district is so far negligible.

BANKS.

Prior to December, 1957, there was no bank in the district of Saharsa excepting the Pay Office of the State Bank of India at Murliganj under the control of the Purnea Branch of the State Bank of India. With the opening of the Branch of the State Bank at Saharsa, the Pay Office of Murliganj was placed under its control during 1958. Its jurisdiction over this Pay Office continued only for a period of two years (February, 1958 to December, 1959) and in 1960 it was again put under the Purnea Branch of the said bank under whose control it is still (1963) functioning. The first branch of the State Bank of India was opened at Supaul in December, 1957. This was followed by the Saharsa Branch in February, 1958 and the Madhepura Branch in December, 1959. A Pay Office under Saharsa Branch was established at Bihariganj in 1958.

The branch bank undertakes all commercial banking transactions as an agent of the Reserve Bank of India, conducts the Government cash work, extends exchange and remittance facilities to the public and pays, receives, collects and remits money and securities on Government account, etc.

From the 9th October 1961 a full-fledged Public Debt Office with safe custody has started functioning at Patna. This Public Debt Office has taken over from the Public Debt Office of Calcutta under the Reserve Bank of India, the management of all Central and State Government loans, the interest of which is payable at places within the State of Bihar. This has been a help to the investors in Saharsa district

SAVINGS IN THE DISTRICT AND SMALL SAVINGS SCHEME.

With the expansion of the activities of the Life Insurance Corporation in rural areas in recent years, the rural population is getting insurance minded and the number of insured persons is increasing.

Small savings of an average man of limited means have a great role to play in the economy of the district, and besides the branches of the State Bank of India which willingly accept small deposits, the Post Offices have also savings departments.

There are altogether 218 Post Offices in the district including a Head Post Office at Saharsa. Out of 218 Post Offices, 35 were doing this savings bank work during 1962-63. The 35 Post Offices doing savings work include a Head Post Office, 31 Sub-Post Offices and three Branch Post Offices.

The total amount of savings bank balances, gross and net from the year 1958-59 to 1962-63 are given below:—

Year.	Gross.	Net.
	Rs.	Rs.
1958-59	18,97,341.00	77,457.00
1959-60	24,94,104.00	2,87,498.00
1960-61	29,03,611.00	8,98,891.00
1961-62	28,74,000.00	1,71,000.00
1962-63 (up to January, 1963)	21,36,000.00	3,33,000.00

Mobilization of small savings was done during World War I when postal cash certificates payable in various durations and rates were issued. This was repeated during World War II as well. The necessity for investment of small savings has become all the more acute because of the vast development projects and various other schemes taken up during the Five-Year Plans. The Chinese aggression (1962) has underlined the need all the more because of the huge defence expenditure that has to be incurred. Unless every one tightens the belt, it will be difficult to hold the price lines at the proper place.

The Central Government have made arrangements for the issue of 12 years' national defence certificates, 10 years' defence deposit certificates, 15 years' annuity certificates, gold bonds, 5 years' interest-free prize bonds, 1965, premium prize bonds, 1963, etc. The State Government have also floated loans. Attractive terms have been offered for investment of the savings.

The figures given below show the total of small savings including the savings banks accounts in the district of Saharsa from 1958-59 to 1962-63 (till January, 1963):—

Year.	Gross.	Net.
	Rs.	Rs.
1958-59	21,89,871.00	3,16,838.00
1959-60	27,45,729.00	5,14,993.00
1960-61	24,00,759.28	13,58,848.36
1961-62	31,47,000.00	3,77,000.09
1962-63	23,36,000.00	1,83,000.00

The response cannot be said to be very good.

It has to be mentioned here that the Small Savings Scheme of the Government started getting a setback from the year 1961-62 due to the constant failure of crops, drought and Kosi floods during the period under review. During the year 1962-63 it received a further setback on account of blocking of stock of cash crop at the growers' level due to the lowest price ever prevailing in the market and at the same time vigorous measures taken by the Government to realise dues. It is expected that the Scheme may receive another hard blow during the current financial year (1963-64) on account of all-round enhanced taxation measures and rising cost of living.

General and Life Insurance.

Prior to the formation of Life Insurance Corporation in 1956, there were agents of almost all the big Life Insurance Companies like the Oriental, New Asiatic, Lakshmi, Bharat, Empire, etc., functioning in Saharsa district. None of these insurance companies had any regular office in the district.

The statistics of Life Insurance business done by the companies before 1956 are not available.

The agents were, however, more confined to the urban areas, i.e., Saharsa, Supaul, Madhepura, Murliganj, etc.* The services given by the agents were extremely good. As the insurance companies merged into Life Insurance Corporation in 1956, the insured persons did not have to lose anything.

*Though the *District Census Handbook of Saharsa*, 1951, does not mention that there were urban areas in Saharsa district but as a matter of fact Saharsa, Supaul, Madhepura, Murliganj, etc., were towns even during 1951 census.

With the nationalisation of Life Insurance business, the Life Insurance Corporation of India became the largest single agency doing Life Insurance business in India. The Corporation was constituted under the Life Insurance Corporation Act of 1956 and was officially established on 1st September, 1956.

From 1st September, 1956 all Indian Life Insurance and Provident Societies as well as all foreign Life Insurance Companies ceased to carry on Life Insurance business in India and their Indian business in this line was taken over by the Life Insurance Corporation.

However, General Insurance, which includes fire, marine, accident, theft, burglary and other insurance business has been left open to the private sector. Most of the previous insurance companies and societies which used to transact all insurance business including life, have now switched over entirely to general insurance business. Purely Life Insurance Companies have been closed down.

Under the organisational set-up of the Corporation, the Saharsa sub-office of the Life Insurance Corporation was started on the 14th November, 1958, under Purnea Branch, which was upgraded to the status of Branch Office in the beginning of the year 1962. Even prior to November, 1958, Nirmali area was under the sway of Darbhanga Branch, which is still (May, 1963) functioning under the same status. This Branch Office at Saharsa has been placed under the territorial jurisdiction of the Muzaffarpur Division of the eastern zone. The Corporation has only one Branch Office in Saharsa district with a Development Centre at Supaul which is functioning since 1962. The Supaul Development Centre is under the charge of Saharsa Branch and there is an Assistant Branch Manager (Development) who looks after the said centre. There are at present (May, 1963) 14 Development Officers in the Saharsa Branch Office. Out of this, there are eight Development Officers directly under the Branch Office and the remaining six are under the Supaul Development Centre. Out of eight Development Officers, one is at Saharsa, one at Sourbazar and one at Sonbarsa having their headquarters at Saharsa proper. Among the rest five Development Officers, two are at Madhepura, one at Murliganj, one at Alamnagar and one at Uda Kishanganj. Out of the six Development Officers of Supaul Development Centre, three are posted at Supaul, one at Birpur, one at Chhatapur and one at Pratapganj. The Development Officers, who have a specified area in their charge, work through appointed agents who are distributed over the villages in their areas. These village agents work on commission basis calculated on the premiums paid on the policies.

The Branch Office collects the proposals along with the first premium instalments either in full or in part and then these proposals are sent to Muzaffarpur Divisional Office for decision in respect of acceptance, etc. The acceptance is sent by the Divisional

Office with copies to the respective agents, Development Officers and the Branch Office. Then the respective Branch collects the balance of the first premium, makes adjustments and issues official receipts to the policy holders. In case the full first premium is realised along with the proposal, the adjustments are made directly by the Divisional Office which also issues the receipts and the policies to the parties.

In Saharsa district, the figures given below from 1959 to 1962 for Life Insurance business show a fluctuating tendency; however, it can be safely concluded that the Life Insurance has been expanding:—

Business Performance.

Year.		No. of proposal.	Introduction.	Completion.
			Rs.	Rs.
1958	..	607	33,12,250	21,00,000
1959	..	1,759	68,17,100	58,16,000
1960	..	2,138	79,01,000	69.69,000
1961	..	2,461	95,83,100	77,00,000
1962	..	1,531	68,37,250	53,00,000
1963-64	..	1,767	67.11,000	58,67,000

The reasons for this increasing tendency are—

(i) reduction in premium rates by rupee one on the whole;

(ii) sense of complete confidence in Life Insurance Corporation due to the guarantee by Government for the policies;

(iii) stress on rural insurance. Private companies neglected rural areas, but the Life Insurance Corporation has extended its operations to rural areas also. The result is that the rural people are fast becoming insurance-minded.

So far as General Insurance is concerned which includes the insurance of godowns, money in transit, goods in transit, fidelity guarantee, personal accident, fire, etc., the incidence is not so high in Saharsa district. General Insurance can be divided into three categories—

(i) Miscellaneous accidents in which motor cars, trucks, buses, motor cycles, burglary, etc., are included:

(ii) Fire including riot risks, floods, lightening, etc., usually covering properties, godowns, workshops, factories, etc.; and

(iii) Marine accidents due to which goods may not arrive intact whilst in transit from one centre to another.

Motor cars and trucks are insured compulsorily against third party risks.

There are about 25 agents of the three subsidiaries of Life Insurance Corporation of India, i.e., Oriental Fire and National Fire and Asiatic Government Security merging into one Oriental Fire and General Insurance, scattered throughout the district of Saharsa. It has also got a paid Inspector at Saharsa. The district is directly looked after by their Divisional Office at Patna where there is a Divisional Secretary. Other General Insurance Companies have their agents and inspectors in the district.

Co-operative Movement, Co-operative Credit Societies and Co-operative Banks in the District of Saharsa.

Co-operative Movement.

The history of the co-operative movement in Saharsa district starts from 1907 when the first Co-operative Society was organised in the Madhepura subdivision. The last *District Gazetteer of Bhagalpur* (1911) mentions as follows*:—

"The Co operative Credit Movement has so far made very little progress in the district of Bhagalpur. The chief reason for this is want of local helpers. There are at present only five societies all located in one area, viz., near the headquarters of Madhipura subdivision, where the work commenced in the year 1907 ....

"A scheme has been drawn up for developing this area round Madhipura and gradually extending it from that centre. The Subdivisional Officer Babu Saroda Prasad Sircar has been the means of starting these societies."

There have been many changes since the days of Byrne. Madhepura is no more a subdivision of Bhagalpur and a separate district was created out of the areas of Madhepura and Supaul subdivisions in April, 1954.

In the year 1908 three more societies were established which followed one in 1909 and seven in 1910 in the district. All these co-operatives were Agricultural Credit Societies with unlimited liabilites. They were registered under the Act of 1904 (Co-operative Societies Act X of 1904). All these societies were financed by the private capitalists, since there was no co-operative bank in those days.

But the year 1911 saw the growth of the first co-operative bank in the district. At a general meeting of the people of Madhepura presided over by the Registrar, Co-operative Societies, Bihar, held on the 8th July, 1911 it was unanimously decided to start a Central Co-operative Bank at Madhepura for the purpose of organising and

* *District Gazetteer of Bhagalpur* (1911) by J. Byrne, p. 120.

financing the 22 co-operative societies which had been then in existence and were financed by the private capitalists. The Bank was registered under the Act of 1904. The Central Co-operative Bank took upon itself the task to settle the affairs of its affiliated societies and freed them from their private *mahajans* or private capitalists. The object of the Bank was to free the agriculturists from the clutches of the *mahajans,* who not only appropriated all their financial resources but also encroached upon the personal liberty of their debtors, to guide the working of the village societies, to teach them thrift and principle of mutual co-operation and to encourage them to adopt improved method of agriculture. The working capital of the Bank in the year 1912-13 was Rs. 64,471 which included borrowings of Rs. 30,000. As a result of the services rendered by the Bank to its affiliated societies, there was a demand for more societies to be opened. But the Bank considered it to be undesirable to affiliate more societies to it, unless those in existence were well placed on sound working basis.

The subsequent years saw the steady growth in the number of societies. By the year 1916-17 there were 48 societies the number of which rose to 97 in the year 1922-23. The working capital of the Bank also rose proportionately, and it stood at Rs. 202,348-13-9 in the year 1922-23.

The year 1924 received a setback in the business of the Bank due to the inclement faces of the nature in the shape of the Kosi floods. The Bank had on the one hand to protect its own interest while on the other hand it had to assist the suffering members of the Primary societies out of an apparently hopeless situation.

By the year 1932 the membership of the Bank had increased to 125 and its state capital to Rs. 34,320 but the societies in the Murliganj area were badly affected by the Kosi floods Six such societies were dissolved in that year.

The Bank faced its worst days in 1934 when due to the flood of the river Kosi and the damages caused by the earthquake during the period under review, a portion of the Bank office was shifted to Supaul, along with the shifting of the subdivisional headquarters. It was only in the year 1938 that the office came back to Madhepura again. The other Co-operative Bank in the district was established in the year 1915-16 at Supaul which within two years went into liquidation and after a long gap, it was only in the year 1952 that the Bank was revived as the Supaul Central Co-operative Union, with limited liabilities. It was finally converted into a Bank on the 23rd April, 1958.

During 1959 there were 367 co-operative societies affiliated with the Madhepura Central Co-operative Bank, out of which 285 were multi-purpose co-operative societies. Among the rest 24 were credit

societies, whereas 58 were industrial co-operative societies. The share capital of the Bank stood at Rs. 78,432.00, the Reserve Fund at Rs. 14,586.00 and the Deposits at Rs. 2,71,255.00. The Bank had borrowed a sum of Rs. 1,50,000.00, from different sources, i.e., Government and others and had lent a sum of Rs. 3,49,973.00.

The position of the Supaul Bank was not encouraging during 1959. There were altogether only 1,190 societies affiliated to it and the share capital of the Bank stood at Rs. 29,995.00.

From the administrative point of view the district has now (April, 1963) been divided into three circles, i.e., Madhepura, Saharsa and Supaul. The jurisdiction of Madhepura Circle extends over the Madhepura subdivision, Saharsa Circle over Sadar subdivision whereas Supaul Circle over Supaul subdivision. Each circle has been put under the charge of an Assistant Registrar.

There were four *Vyapar Mandals* and six large-sized co-operative societies functioning in the district during 1959. The Murliganj Marketing Society (*Vyapar Mandal*) had worked as an agent of the State Trading Corporation for the purchase of jute from the agriculturists and thus saved them from the clutches of the private merchants during 1959. The large-sized society at Sonbarsa is running a medical shop very efficiently.

Co-operative Banks.

In Saharsa district till 14th April, 1961, there were two Central Co-operative Banks—one at Madhepura and the other at Supaul but with the recommendations of the Reserve Bank of India both these banks amalgamated into one on the 15th April, 1961, with its head office at Madhepura known as Madhepura-Supaul Central Co-operative Bank Limited. At Supaul there is now a branch of Madhepura-Supaul Central Co-operative Bank, Limited which was registered under Bihar and Orissa Co-operative Societies Act VI, 1935 on 24th June, 1960. The area of operation of both these Banks before amalgamation was as follows:—

Supaul Central Co-operative Bank in Madhepura and Saharsa Sadar subdivisions had remained static even after the amalgamation. But as Madhepura-Supaul Central Co-operative Bank, Limited, Madhepura, the head office, the area of its operation extended throughout the district.

The main activities of the Central Co-operative Bank are to provide agricultural finance to their affiliated co-operative societies which in their turn finance their agriculturist members as short-term and medium-term loans for productive purposes. Short-term loans are advanced to agriculturist members to meet their current production needs such as seeds, manures, etc. These loans are made available to them at short notice and are repaid within nine to twelve

months and in exceptional cases like cultivation of sugarcane within fifteen months. Medium-term loans are advanced for the purchase of live-stock, agricultural implements, etc., for a period of three to five years. The rate of interest on all kinds of loans was 6¼ per cent per annum from ultimate borrower, i.e., the cultivators but from January, 1961 it has been raised to 7¼ per cent. Loans are advanced on the security of the landed properties of the members but such securities are not required for loans below Rs. 200.00. Personal securities are taken in all cases. Loans are also available from co-operative societies for non-agriculturist members, such as artisans to the extent of Rs. 100.00 only, as working capital.

The figures below show the present position of the Central Co-operative Banks of the district:—

Name of the Circle and the Bank.	Year.	Number of members.		Share capital.	Deposits.	Loans.	
		Indivi-dual.	Socie-ties.			Advance.	Demand.
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
				Rs.	Rs.	Rs.	Rs.
Madhepura-Supaul Central Co-operative Bank, Limited, Madhepura and Supaul.	1956-57	47	237	22,675	1,40,506	1,77,794	1,92,173
	1957-58	47	300	26,900	1,78,939	2,76,313	3,44,341
	1958-59	47	338	78,432	2,51,100	43,315	4,33,625
	1959-60	47	408	89,600	3,03,732	1,56,859	4,56,477
	1960-61	47	439	1,29,324	4,97,738	2,28,355	4,28,529
	1961-62	47	457	1,37,966	5 02,705	2,63,317	4,42,888

Realisation	Over-due.	Out-standing.	Percentage of collection.	Realisation of interest bearing and non-interest bearing loans.	Working capital.	Profit (+).	Loss (—).
9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16
Rs.	Rs.	Rs.			Rs.	Rs.	Rs.
98,226	93,947	2,34,547	51	178	1,75,940	9,835	Not available.
40,314	3,04,027	4,35,576	11	90	4,61,813	Not available.	5,087
1,28,549	3,05,076	3,50,313	29	40	4,74,655	Not available.	Not available.
1,01,966	3,54,611	4,11,560	23	7	5,77,053	Not available.	Not available.
2,87,141	1,74,840	3,82,744	62	414	9,97,594	..	..
2,04,232	2,44,123	4,41,828	48	Nil	10,90,408	18,000	Nil

DIFFERENT TYPES OF CO-OPERATIVE SOCIETIES FUNCTIONING IN THE DISTRICT OF SAHARSA.

The following figures will show the number of the different types of co-operative societies and banks functioning in the district till June, 1962:—

Types of Societies.	Number.	Members.
Madhepura and Saharsa Circles—		
(1) Madhepura-Supaul Central Co-operative Bank, Limited, Madhepura.	1	Not available
(2) Total number of Co-operative Societies ..	457	..
(3) Multi-purpose Co-operative Societies ..	344	16,869
(4) Large-sized Multi-purpose Co-operative Societies ..	4	891
(5) Weavers' Co-operative Societies	3	557
(6) Fishermen's Co-operative Societies	3	179
(7) Paddy Husking Co-operative Societies ..	5	144
(8) Oil Crushing Co-operative Societies	21	856
(9) Other Agricultural Processing Societies ..	15	540
(10) Co-operative Stores	5	334
(11) Shoe-Makers' or Charmakar Co-operative Societies ..	2	52
(12) Co-operative Farming	1	15
(13) *Vyapar Mandal*	6	Not available.
(14) Sugarcane Supply Co-operative Societies ..	1	46
(15) Milkmen's Co-operative Societies	7	182
(16) Poultry Co-operative Societies	3	61
(17) *Kashthakula* Industrial Co-operative Societies ..	2	30
Supaul Circle—		
(1) Madhepura-Supaul Central Co-operative Bank, Limited, Branch, Supaul.	1	Not available.
(2) Primary Co-operative Societies	6	19,476
(3) Multi-purpose Co-operative Societies ..	227	..
(4) Fishermen's Co-operative Societies	3	150
(5) Oilmen's Co-operative Societies	16	1,360
(6) Weavers' Co-operative Societies	4	600
(7) Milk Dairy Co-operative Societies	5	100

Types of Societies.	Number.	Members.
(8) Labour Co-operative Societies	1	38
(9) Poultry Co-operative Societies	3	60
(10) Hand Pounding Co-operative Societies ..	27	152
(11) Better Farming Co-operative Societies ..	1	26
(12) Joint Co-operative Societies	4	173
(13) Teachers' Co-operative Societies	3	176
(14) Consumers' Stores	12	32
(15) *Gramodyog* Co-operative Societies	4	103
(16) Harijan Co-operative Societies	1	23
(17) Industrial Co-operative Societies	12	142
(18) *Sarvodaya* Co-operative Societies	1	36

The Bihar State Co-operative Land Mortgage Bank.

With a view to provide long-term credit to the agriculturists for the purchase of expensive agricultural equipments and machinery, liquidation of old debts and development of land, provision was made under the Second Five-Year Plan to organise a Central Land Mortgage Bank with 17 branches, one in each of the districts of Bihar. Under this scheme a branch office has been functioning since November, 1960, at Saharsa under a Branch Manager. At present (May, 1963) there are 128 members out of whom 36 members have applied so far for loans to the total amount of Rs. 88,103.00. Only two members, i.e., one of Madhepura police-station and the other of Kishanganj police-station under Madhepura subdivision have been advanced loans of Rs. 4,000.00 (March, 1962) and Rs. 10,000.00 (December, 1962) respectively.

The first instalment of Rs. 4,000.00 was repaid by the party on the 26th of December, 1962. The amount of the realisation was Rs. 439.20. The instalments are paid at the rate of Rs. 109.80 per thousand of rupees per annum.

The Bank advances loans on the security of land. The amount of loan is payable in fifteen annual instalments. The amount of loan to be advanced to a member ranges from Rs. 500.00 to Rs. 10,000.00.

The work of the Land Mortgage Bank is suffering due to the non-availability of encumbrance report from the District Sub-Registry Office, Saharsa.

Course of Trade.

The communication arteries—roadways, waterways, railways and the airways—have been described separately on the text on "Communications". The district had been a play-ground of the ravages of

the river Kosi. Many of the old railway tracks have been washed away by the Kosi floods. The rail-link connecting Bhaptiahi, Pratapganj and Nirmali had been washed away. The importance of Bhaptiahi and Pratapganj as trade centres has been lost. Nirmali has maintained its importance as a trade centre but is at a considerable distance from the district headquarters.

The railways carry the largest load of trade and commerce of the district. Roadways are yet to be developed. About a decade the boats were also carrying on a lot of trade and commerce. Since the river Kosi has been tamed with the construction of the embankments and the barrage in Nepal territories the boats have almost ceased to carry the load.

Present Imports and Exports.

The commodities of import are mostly consumers' goods. They include foodgrains, *kirana* goods, salt, spices, petrol, diesel oil, cosmetics, woollen, cotton and silk cloth, coal, kerosene oil, mustard oil, tea, timber, iron and steel, cement, leather goods, scientific appliances, etc. The commodities which are exported from the district are jute, bamboo, *ghee,* maize, bone, hide and skin, fish, *bankas* grass, etc.

The statement below shows the chief places and areas from where important commodities are imported:—

Name of commodities.	Places from where imported.
Aluminium wire ..	Howrah.
Atta and *maida* ..	Allahabad, Belangan (Agra), Kanpur, Katihar and Patna.
Bangles, glass, chimney and crockery.	Calcutta, Chhota Ambona, Firozabad and Sealdah.
Betel nut ..	Bombay and Howrah.
Biscuits and confectionary ..	Gwalior and Rajpura.
Boulders ..	Dharan (Nepal).
Cement ..	Banjari, Dalmianagar and Jukhi.
Chemicals and medicines .	Bombay, Calcutta, Darbhanga, Howrah and Wadibandar.
Coal ..	Barakar, Giridih, Jharia, Kusunda, Ondal, Patherdih and Sitarampur.
Cotton piece goods, Cloth and Clothes.	Ahmedabad, Bhagalpur, Bombay, Kanpur and New Delhi.

Name of commodities.		Places from where imported.
Diesel oil	..	Budge Budge (near Diamond Harbour, Calcutta) and Katihar.
Disinfectant liquids	..	Howrah.
Electrical goods	..	Aligarh, Calcutta and Delhi.
Gram, pulses and *gur*	..	Bahraich, Begusarai, Hathras and Kanpur, Mokameh, Barailey City, Sahametganj.
Iron and steel	..	Bhagalpur, Howrah, Jamshedpur, Katihar, Khagaria, Kidderpur Dock, Kulti, Ludhiana, New Delhi, Burnpur and Patna.
Kerosene oil	..	Barauni, Budge Budge, Bhagalpur and Garhara (near Barauni).
Leather goods	..	Belanganj and Kanpur.
Lock and key	..	Aligarh and Wadibandar.
Plates	..	Wadibandar.
Mustard oil and other oils	..	Alwar (Rajasthan), Hisar, Sirsa. rus, Khelan, Kanpur, Muzaffarpur, Tohna and Wadibandar.
Mustard seed	..	Alwar (Rajasthan), Hisar, Sirsa.
Petrol	..	Budge Budge and Katihar
R.C.C. spun pipes and collars		Patna.
Rice	..	Arrah, Buxar, Galgalia, Garh Banaili, Firozpur, Janakpur Road and Raxaul.
Salt	..	Chitpurghat, Elodi (Rajasthan, Howrah, Jamnagar (Madhya Pradesh), Tuticorin.
Shellac	..	Barabhum and Mirzapur.
Spices	..	Bombay and Unjha (Uttar Pradesh).
Stationery products	..	Ateli and Belanganj.
Stone chips	..	Dharan (Nepal) and Pakaur.
Sugar	..	Harinagar, Hasanpur Road, Lohat, Lauria and Sakri.

Name of commodities.	Place from where imported.
Tents ..	Buxar.
Toilets and washing soaps and *vanaspati* oil.	Bhagalpur, Bombay, Madhubani, Monghyr, Muzaffarpur and Wadibandar.
Wheat ..	Kidderpur Dock.
Wood, Sal and timber ..	Binaguri, Gosapur, Nepal and Raja, Bhatkhawa (Assam).

The following table gives a picture of the exports from the district:—

Name of the commodities.	Destination of exports.
Bamboo ..	Pahlezaghat (Patna).
Bone ..	Calcutta and Magarwara (near Kanpur).
Coarse grain ..	Howrah and Khagaria.
Fish .	Assam and West Bengal.
Ghee ..	Bhagalpur, Monghyr, Muzaffarpur, Purnea.
Hides and skin ..	Kanpur and Sealdah.
Jute ..	Calcutta, Kankinara, Titagarh (West Bengal) and Muktapur.
Maize ..	Chapra and Khagaria.
Oilseed ..	Calcutta.
Rice ..	Assam, West Bengal and within the State.
Bankas grass ..	Dehri-on-Sone, Gaya, Jamui and Monghyr.

The above mentioned goods are mostly transported by railways. Bullock carts carry them from the place of produce to the railway station or *mandis*. Due to absence of good metalled roads trucks are very few in the district. Commodities like petroleum, kerosene oil, cloth, grains, spices, etc., are mainly purchased by the wholesale

dealers of the district who generally place orders to the big merchants of Bombay, Calcutta, etc., for exporting the commodities by rail. The wholesale dealers store the commodities and sell them to the retail dealers.

The commoditywise goods traffic at Saharsa junction, Madhepura, Supaul, Murliganj, Bihariganj, Budhma and Nirmali Railway Stations (N. E. Railway) have been given separately in the tables.

The table below shows the commoditywise inward goods traffic for Saharsa Railway Station during the year 1962.—

Commodities.	Imports in quintals.	Commodities of export.
Atta	15,716	Bone, *Ghee*, Jute, Bamboo, Hide and Skin.
Chura	350	Sugarcane.
Gram	242	
Kerosene oil..	3,681	
Maida	677	
Mustard oil	183	
Miscellaneous, i. e., biscuits, castor oil, paddy, salt, tea and several other articles of daily use.	8,878	
Potato	4,770	
Rice	20,730	
Sugar	2,590	
Wheat	11,965	

The figures of jute traffic (outward) for Dauram-Madhepura Railway Station are as follows:—

Year.	Weight in maunds.
1956-57	2,56,859
1957-58	1,65,721
1958-59	1,95,653
1959-60	1,77,438
1960-61	43,195 and 20,116 Quintals.
1961-62	97,781 Quintals.
1962-63 (up to December, 1962)	67,200 Quintals.

The average goods and parcel traffic dealt with and earnings thereof during 1962 for Dauram-Madhepura Railway Station were as follows:—

	Outward.		Inward.	
	Weight in quintals.	Amount in rupees.	Weight in quintals.	Amount in rupees.
Goods traffic	11,695	52,422	24,077	49,715
Parcel traffic .. .	1,125	1,941	2,441	12,101

Principal commodities of outward goods traffic and inward goods traffic are jute, oilseeds and rice, salt, sugar, kerosene oil, pulses, coal, cement, etc., for Dauram-Madhepura Railway Station.

The statement below shows the comparative statistics of outward goods traffic for Dauram-Madhepura Railway Station with weight and amount for 1961 and 1962:—

Month.	Year.			
	1961.		1962.	
	Weight in quintals.	Amount in rupees.	Weight in quintals.	Amount in rupees.
1	2	3	4	5
January	11,527	60,182	18,046	61,392
February	12,264	46,827	14,765	74,267
March	7,648	24,665	8,567	1,21,726
April	6,287	21,869	8,133	46,896
May..	8,405	22	..	..
June	5,004	23,861	7,343	36,100
July..	3,954	11,053	13,167	35,101
August	12,372	47,900	10,682	68,806
September	14,888	69,041	8,012	41,678
October	4,631	23,497	8,562	12,548
November	13,003	35,251	11,656	42,381
December	16,432	42,060	9,166	32,196

The table below shows the commoditywise outward goods traffic in quintals for the Supaul Railway Station:—

Year.	Commodities.	Month.					
		January.	February.	March.	April.	May.	June.
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
1960	Jute	Nil	10,161	26,009	4,673	2,939	82,650
	Oilseeds ..	Nil	3,276	6,306	Nil	Bones and coal 110	Nil
	Other grains and maize	Nil	3,986	1,926	217	4,326	79,423
	Hides and bones ..	Nil	456	1,339	260	156	78,203
	Miscellaneous goods ..	Nil	12,469	3,811	4,149	2,007	1,36,600
1961	Jute	14,122	14,122	11,925	8,250	5,484	1,02,638
	Oilseeds	Nil	1,830	1,006	Coal 2,458	Bones and coal 2,458	Nil
	Other grains and maize	1,830	1,856	1,019	4,115	4,429	1,05,350
	Hides and bones ..	1,856	221	203	109	89	9,991
	Miscellaneous goods ..	221	893	153	1,153	317	1,66,200
1962	Jute	30,599	10,786	17,715	14,964	9,466	10,304
	Oilseeds ..	Nil	Nil	1,624	Oil cakes 1.047	Nil	Nil
	Other grains and maize	1,025	2,657	4	3,440	1,820	1.092
	Hides and bones ..	167	830	206	Nil	92	291
	Miscellaneous goods ..	585	3,114	2,050	255	704	1,772

Year.	Commodities.	Month.					
		July.	August.	September	October.	November.	December.
1	2	9	10	11	12	13	14
1960	Jute	318	3.086	14 423	8,731	14,704	15,274
	Oilseeds	Nil	Nil	Nil	Nil	Nil	Nil
	Other grains and maize..	6,150	20,448	6 211	2,525	3,196	4,012
	Hides and bones ..	137	Nil	372	129	172	172
	Miscellaneous goods ..	1.450	285	1,731	514	2,113	256
1961	Jute	2,683	9,297	24,548	23,382	12,584	14,421
	Oilseeds ..	Nil	Nil	Nil	Nil	Nil	Nil
	Other grains and maize..	21,206	10,166	2,311	6.672	1,210	497
	Hides and bones ..	75	Nil	136	104	55	78
	Miscellaneous goods ..	1,674	406	198	969	681	615
1962	Jute	12,464	13,153	11,386	5,971	13,048	10,176
	Oilseeds . ..	Nil	Nil	Nil	Nil	Nil	Nil
	Other grains and maize	12,695	2,075	4,265	2.935	2,526	1,911
	Hides and bones ..	42	Nil	164	20	216	317
	Miscellaneous goods ..	1,331	498	588	388	747	974

The principal commodities of import at Supaul are iron and steel, kerosene oil, cement, rice, cloth and clothes, coal, pulses, sugar, salt, medicines and several other articles of daily use.

The table below shows the comparative statistics of outward goods traffic for Supaul Railway Station with total weight and amount from the year 1960 to 1962:—

Year.	Weight in quintals and amount in rupees.	Month.					
		January.	February	March.	April.	May.	June.
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
1960	Weight in quintals ..	Not available.	30,348	39,391	11,245	9,538	37.088
	Amount in rupees ..	Not available.	53,074	71,093	38,358	12,419	Not available.
1961	Weight in quintals ..	17,029	18.922	14,306	16,085	11,381	3,76,881
	Amount in rupees ..	95,560	95,500	76,112	61,274	47,526	Not available.
1962	Weight in quintals ..	32,376	16,640	21,599	19,706	12,082	13,519
	Amount in rupees ..	74.858	67,714	1,09,789	98,191	65,519	63,985

Year.	Weight in quintals and amount in rupees.	Month.					
		July.	August.	September.	October.	November.	December.
1	2	9	10	11	12	13	14
1960	Weight in quintals ..	30,263	7,595	22,737	31,627	20,185	19,069
	Amount in rupees ..	31.593	27.590	1,13,464	1,55,779	97,767	57,461
1961	Weight in quintals ..	25,638	19,869	27,183	11,809	14,530	15,611
	Amount in rupees ..	43,858	38,530	1,56,752	57,471	65,892	64,824
1962	Weight in quintals ..	26,532	28,175	16.403	9,314	16,537	13,378
	Amount in rupees ..	97,068	11,252	66,727	12,951	60,385	67,188

The table below shows the outward parcel traffic for Supaul Railway Station with total weight and amount from the year 1960 to 1962:—

Year.	Weight in quintals and amount in rupees.	Month.					
		January.	February.	March.	April.	May.	June.
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
1960	Weight in quintals ..	Not available.	190	159	132	177	1,865
	Amount in rupees ..	Not available.	1,477	1,149	1,371	1,237	3,459
1961	Weight in quintals ..	247	208	416	245	378	1,917
	Amount in rupees ..	417	1,855	2,436	2,970	2,685	3,535
1962	Weight in quintals ..	292	255	307	190	453	2,135
	Amount in rupees ..	605	2,158	2,184	1,532	3,429	7,673

Year.	Weight in quintals and amount in rupees.	Month.					
		July.	August.	September.	October.	November.	December.
1	2	9	10	11	12	13	14
1960	Weight in quintals ..	2,231	2,665	496	1,672	580	469
	Amount in rupees ..	31,593	3,681	1,602	3,554	2,405	2,269
1961	Weight in quintals ..	4,692	4,593	4,917	2,249	668	324
	Amount in rupees ..	722	5,602	4,636	5,085	2,396	1,235
1962	Weight in quintals ..	4,716	3,652	1,123	1,175	Not available.	Not available.
	Amount in rupees ..	5,701	6,257	3,336	2,315	Not available.	Not available.

The statement below shows the average monthly quantity of the imported commodities at the Supaul Railway Station:—

Commodities.	Average weight in maunds. Per month.
Coal	2,000
Kerosene oil	2,000
Mustard oil	1,000
Rice	2,000
Salt	3,000
Sugar	1,000
Vegetable oil	2,000

The table below shows the outward and inward goods and parcel traffic for Murliganj Railway Station from 1960 to 1962:—

Year.	Jute.	Bamboo.	Miscellaneous.		Inward goods.
	Weight in maunds and quintals.	Number of wagons.	Number of wagons.	Weight in quintals.	Maunds and quintals.
1	2	3	4	5	6
1960 ..	1,61,431 maunds and 98,445 quintals.	328	227	Not available.	61,973 maunds and 89,911 quintals.
1961 ..	1,65,487 quintals	208	269	1,91,703	Not available.
1962 ..	1,63,158 quintals	282	293	Not available.	Inward goods Total number of wagons 2,096.

Year.	Outward goods earnings in rupees.	Goods cash transaction in rupees.	Weight of outward parcels in maunds and quintals or kg.	Amount of outward parcel in rupees.	Amount of inward parcel in rupees.
1	7	8	9	10	11
1960.. ..	76,258	3,05,598	1,351 mds. and 52,211 Kg.	9,476	25,590
1961.. .	8,45,221	5,23,727	3,240 Kg.	11,770	29,257
1962.. ..	96,262	4,15,176	2,390 Kg.	12,269	13,670

The principal commodities of import at Murliganj Railway Station are kerosene oil, coal, stone chips, flour, wheat, mustard oil, rice, grains and pulses, sugar, salt, mustard seeds, *gur*, glass, toilets, etc.

The table below shows the outward goods traffic for Budhma Railway Station for 1961 and 1962:—

Month.	Year.			
	1961.		1962.	
	Weight in maunds and quintals.	Amount in rupees.	Weight in quintals.	Amount in rupees.
	Maunds.			
January	5,800	15,594	2,749	7,960
February	3,363	7,343	2,48,189	8,701
March	2,63,774	4,105	61,089	8,574
	Quintals			
April	3,54,333	3,609	99,577	1,864
May	2,237	3,872	2,543	5,712
June	2,958	4,816	5,386	12,926
July	2,01,860	3,122	5,980	19,564
August	1,06,399	1,797	1,784	4,030
September	591	1,042	917	2,366
October	15,611	891	5,241	7,919
November	5,737	15,849	2,561	7,452
December	3,241	8,907	2,511	9,132

The main articles of outward goods traffic for Budhma are jute, bamboo, grains, hides and bones, etc., and imported commodities are rice, mustard oil, kerosene oil and other articles of daily consumption.

The table below shows the weight and amount of outward parcel traffic for Budhma Railway Station from 1961 to 1962:—

Month.	Year.			
	1961.		1962.	
	Weight in maunds and Kg.*	Amount in rupees.	Weight in Kg.	Amount in rupees
	Maunds.			
January	2,669	252	3,493	120
February	3,787	246	5,493	263
March	2,295	231	1,518	88
	Kg.			
April	4	15	6	82
May	802	86	838	451
June	2,795	327	604	58
July	1,126	85	1,069	78
August	2,285	135	2,047	167
September	1,166	107	4,776	256
October	3,109	289	8,246	376
November	3,202	207	5,444	108
December	3,375	174	8,830	286

*Kilogrammes.

The table below shows the weight and amount of outward goods traffic for Nirmali Railway Station from 1961 to 1962:—

Year.	Weight in quintals.	Amount in rupees.
1961	2,16,505	2,74,914
1962	2.05,197	5,20,777

The table below shows the commoditywise outward goods traffic for Nirmali Railway Station from 1961 to 1962:—

Commodities.	Year. 1961.		1962.	
	Weight in quintals.	Amount in rupees.	Weight in quintals.	Amount in rupees.
1	2	3	4	5
Rice .. .	1,30,959	1,00,179	67,669	76,708
Gram, pulses and peas ..	2,716	6.297	6,693	7,540
Timber and bamboo ..	15,443	37,377	6,845	17,180
Hides and skin .	5,557	3,441	876	4,138
Sugarcane ..	8,219	20,280	8,325	4,249
Jute raw or pressed ..	11,445	43,324	43,589	2,85,770
Jaggery and molasses ..	Nil	Nil	420	485
Wheat including *atta* ..	50	42	2,828	4,262
Cement	Nil	Nil	1,095	704
Coal	Nil	Nil	2,310	1,212
Other foodgrains ..	85	78	580	478
Other commodities ..	41,195	68,415	55,404	1,32,759

The inward commodities are flour, mustard oil, cloth and clothes, betel nut, wheat, coal, iron and steel, toilets, spices, medicine, crockery, sugar and several other articles of daily use.

Foodgrains and jute are the main commodities for export. Lakhs of maunds of jute are grown in the district and are exported particularly from Murliganj, Madhepura, Nirmali, Sonbarsa, Saharsa and Supaul Railway Stations.

The volume of internal trade in the district is apparent from the receipt of Sales Tax. The rate of Sales Tax varies from 2nP. to 9 nP. under Bihar Sales Tax Act, 1959 which repealed the old Bihar Sales Tax Act, 1947. There are two types of taxes, viz., General Sales Tax and Special Sales Tax.

General Sales Tax is levied at the rate of ½ per cent of the total taxable turnover. Special Sales Tax is levied at different rates specified in Schedules I, II and III appended with Government Circular no. 9133, dated 1st July, 1959.

There are certain commodities which are exempted from General Sales Tax. They are coal, cotton, hides and skin, iron and steel, oilseeds, fertilizers, fruits, etc. The rate of Special Sales Tax is 2 nP., in respect of the above commodities per rupee of the turnover.

From 1st September, 1959 there has been a change in the law regarding the collection of Sales Tax. Sales Tax is also levied on those businessmen whose annual turnover ranges from Rs. 5,000 to Rs. 15,000. Previously the Sales Tax was levied on only those businessmen whose annual turnover exceeded Rs. 15,000. There is no separate amount collected on the turnover of different commodities in trade. It is also not possible to ascertain the number of tax-evaders and the amount of tax evaded.

However, the Statement of Sales Tax of the *District Statistical Hand-book* 1961-62, *Saharsa* (under print) is as follows:—

Name of the statutes	Year.		
	1955-56.	1956-57.	1957-58.
1	2	3	4
	Rs.	Rs.	Rs.
Passengers Goods Traffic Tax ..	2,830.00	2,195.00	6,538.00
Bihar Sales Tax	4,22,557.00	5,29,176.00	5,50,940 00

Name of the statutes.	Year.			
	1958-59.	1959-60.	1960-61.	1961-62.
1	5	6	7	8
	Rs.	Rs.	Rs.	Rs.
Passengers Goods Traffic Tax.	9,934.00	8,674.00	3,315.00	280.00
Bihar Sales Tax ..	4,94,468.00	3,95,429.00	4,23,400.00	4,49,980.00

The Bihar Sales Tax was introduced in the then Saharsa subdistrict in 1950. Since then the fluctuating receipts indirectly point out the fluctuating courses of trade in the district also changes in Sales Tax law. It has to be borne in mind that prior to 1959 the rate of Sales Tax was one pice per rupee of the turnover. Hence on this basis the total turnover of all businessmen excepting the non-taxable commodities under the then Sales Tax was Rs. 4,22,557, Rs. 5,29,176, Rs. 5,50,940 and Rs. 4,94,468 in 1955-56, 1956-57, 1957-58 and 1958-59 respectively.

According to the census of 1951, there were altogether 8,750 persons (males 7,347 and females 1,403) engaged in different kinds of trade and commerce, either as employers or as employees or as independent workers. Out of the total of 8,750 persons engaged in trade and commerce, 1,014 persons (males 943 and females 71) were the employers, 1,480 (males 1,084 and females 396) employees and 6,256 (males 5,320 and females 936) independent workers.

The table below shows the number of persons engaged in different kinds of trades*:—

Name of the business.	Total.		Employers.		Employees.		Independent workers.	
	Males.	Females.	Males.	Females.	Males.	Females.	Males.	Females.
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
Retail trade otherwise unclassified.	1,053	406	205	17	215	120	633	269
Retail trade in foodstuff.	4,168	708	384	35	277	136	3,507	537
Retail trade in fuel (including petrol).	966	159	150	8	323	105	493	46
Retail trade in textile and leather goods.	615	51	94	9	183	22	338	20
Wholesale trade in foodstuff.	390	61	109	2	39	13	242	46
Insurance	31	Nil	Nil	Nil	31	Nil	Nil	Nil
Money lending, banking and other financial business.	124	18	1	Nil	16	Nil	107	18

* Source—*District Census Handbook of Saharsa*, 1951, pp. 34—36.

Regulated Markets.

There is no regulated market in the district. The Bihar Agricultural Produce Markets Act, 1960 has not yet been made applicable to this district. The agriculturists trading in jute and foodgrains suffer a lot from speculation, price-fluctuations and cornering of the market.

Centres of wholesale business and mandis.

The centres of wholesale business in the district are Murliganj, Madhepura, Singheshwarsthan, Saharsa, Supaul, Nirmali, and Bihariganj. Jute, bamboo, cloth, rice, *ghee,* and grains other than rice are the principal commodities for wholesale business.

Some Trade Centres.

Murliganj is an old trade centre. The branch line of the N. E. Railway was extended from Purnea to Murliganj in 1929 and then it was connected with Madhepura in 1952. Kosi floods used to visit the area and even inundate the streets and markets of the town. Floods were exploited by the merchants. During the floods the merchants used to send their commodities to Sahebganj (Santal Parganas) and other places by country boats. The main commodities of trade during those days were foodgrains, mustard seeds, *ghee,* maize, paddy, etc. The production of jute was very meagre in the thirties.

Earlier there was not a single metalled road and Murliganj had no connection either with Purnea or Bhagalpur district. A man had to cross seven *dhars* (Benga, Baluha, Loram, Chauri, Bhudhma, Manikpur and Gumti) for going to Madhepura from Murliganj. The want of good roads was a great obstacle for trade and commerce. But during rains both men and materials were carried to Madhepura from Murliganj easily by country boats. Milk, *ghee* and fish were in abundance and they along with the produce of the land were sold very cheap. Cultivation of jute was done on a large scale from about 1941. In 1941, there were about 11 merchants who used to purchase jute from the cultivators. The cultivators brought their commodities on horse-back, bullock-carts or as head load. The main place of export was Calcutta. The rate of the price of jute has been subject to great fluctuations.

On a rough estimate the local produce of jute is about 6 lakhs of maunds in 1961-62 as against 2 lakhs in 1941-42 and this produce is exported through Murliganj to Calcutta, Muktapur and Katihar. The bulk is exported to Katihar.

A *Vyapar Mandal Sahyog Samiti* established in January, 1959 and *Pat Vyavasayi Sangh* established in April, 1962 try to overcome the difficulties of their respective members so far as jute cultivation and trade are concerned. The jute area in this section is likely to

decrease when the sugar mill at Banmankhi in Purnea district adjoining Murliganj will be started. Steps are being taken to start the sugar mill. It may be mentioned that a lot of *mesta,* an inferior kind of jute is grown in the area and passes through Murliganj.

Besides Jute, Murliganj also exports maize, paddy and a small quantity of rice. A lot of rice from Nepal used to come to Murliganj *via* Forbesganj for export. This flow has recently been almost stopped (May, 1963).

The Murliganj *arhatdars* charge for *gosala* and *dharmada* at 12 nP. per hundred rupees of commodities worth of transaction. The income is meant for charitable purposes. It is understood that the yearly receipt from these two charges comes to Rs. 10,000 and Rs. 12,000 per annum.

As noticed elsewhere Murliganj has got very bad roads. Bad roads affect trade and commerce. Murliganj has great potentialities as a trade centre provided the road communications are developed.

Madhepura and Supaul are subdivisional headquarters. They have had the advantage of some roads and telegraphic and railway connection for a few decades. Naturally these two places have been important trade centres. Supaul at one time had a large cattle market held twice in a week.

Jute is the principal commodity of export from these two places. The jute wholesalers procure jute from petty farmers and export them to Calcutta and other places. The figures for jute turnover through the railways have been given. It is not possible to get the figures of turnover through the roadways or waterways. Dry fish and maize are other items of export from these two places. Supaul exports about 2 lakhs of maunds of maize to Saran and other districts of the State. Maize in small quantity is also exported to the same destination from Madhepura.

Development of the roadways is taking place at a rapid pace in these two subdivisions. Supaul and Madhepura are also being rapidly urbanised. More trucks and passenger buses are coming on the roads. All these developments will help trade and commerce immensely and Supaul and Madhepura will become bigger trade centres in the future.

Singheshwar is another important place for jute trade and its nearest loading railway station is Madhepura. About one lakh maunds of jute is exported from here. Singheshwar is a Hindu pilgrim centre also and during *Shivaratri* a big *mela* is organised which lasts for a month. Transaction of various household commodities worth several lakhs of rupees is done during this *mela*. There is an important daily cattle market. The very fact that there could be a daily cattle market shows the volume of transaction.

Sonbarsa Railway Station is important for the export of jute (about one lakh maunds every year) to Calcutta. The road communications are bad.

Nirmali, another important trade centre, has a business of more than four lakh maunds of rice per year. Rice is exported to Santal Parganas district. The other commodities of export are jute, linseed and *bankas* grass used for making ropes. In May, 1963 four rice mills were found working. Jute and linseed are procured from the local areas and rice is imported from Nepal. The approximate transaction of jute is of about one lakh maunds and of linseed about 10,000 maunds. Sugarcane is exported to Sakri Sugar Factory. About three decades back there were sugar factories at Manoharpatti (about four miles away from Nirmali and Bhaptiahi). It has to be mentioned here that Bhaptiahi was connected with Nirmali by railway before the Kosi ravages. During 1938 the Kosi washed away the two sugar factories and the railways. Thereafter, the sugarcane began to be exported to Sakri by train.

There are eight jute bailing presses at Nirmali. For the last two years the trade in jute is on the decline because of low price of jute. It is reported that the jute of the area is of inferior quality in comparison to that of Supaul and Murliganj and hence the price of jute here is lower. Grass worth rupees five lakhs is exported from here to different places within the State and outside. This grass (*bankas*) is used for making various types of rope.

Nirmali has poor road and rail connections. Bullock-carts in the dry season and country boats during rains are the conveyances. Nirmali was directly connected with Saharsa by rail through Raghopur and Bhaptiahi but the railway tracks were washed away by Kosi floods. Nirmali is now connected with Saharsa through a much round about railway track *via* Mansi-Khagaria-Samastipur. This has a great effect on the trade of the district. Nirmali rice does not come to Saharsa and rice from there is exported to other districts. Onion which is grown in abundance in the area is sold at Rs. 2 to Rs. 3 per maund whereas in Darbhanga the usual rate of onion is Rs. 8 and Rs. 9 per maund. Although within the district of Saharsa, the trade centre at Nirmali works somewhat separately.

Bhaptiahi has ceased to be an important trade centre. At one time it had a brisk trade in *ghee*, jute, rice and cereals. This place was directly linked up by railway and boat communications with different trade centres but with the ravages of Kosi, Bhaptiahi is almost isolated.

Pratapganj and Karjainbazar have now a small local trade in foodgrains. They were more important trade centres when the railways ran in that area. Kosi ravages have destroyed the railway connections and eclipsed them.

Simrahibazar has some trade in *ghee,* jute, *sanai* and foodgrains. They are exported to Forbesganj and Katihar *via* Birpur and Murliganj. Simrahibazar is connected with Birpur by a fair-weather road.

Bhimnagar and Birpur at one time were important for boat trade. Supaul exports thousands of maunds of jute to Forbesganj (Purnea district) *via* Birpur as Birpur has a metalled road link with Forbesganj. The condition of Supaul-Birpur Road is, however, not good and during rains it is not possible to ply carts or trucks on it.

Bihariganj is noted for trade in wheat, gram, paddy, rice, barley, mustard seed, jute, maize, *ghee* and pulses. The commodities of export are jute and maize which are sent to Calcutta and other places in Bengal and in Saran district respectively.

Bihariganj has a great potentiality as a trade centre when better roadways are given in the area.

Budhma, a small railway station on North Eastern Railway on Saharsa-Murliganj line has a good volume of trade. The Murliganj merchants easily get wagons here for export of jute and bamboo. A table has been given earlier showing the volume of outward goods and parcel traffic of the place.

Retail Marketing Centres.

Saharsa needs a more developed retail market. The district has very few towns and the people in the villages are getting shop-minded. Hence there is great demand for various commodities such as watch, fan, radio, transistor, cut garments, cycles, cigarettes, etc. The supply in the retail market in the villages is very poor yet. Most of the retail shops are at the urban areas like Saharsa, Madhepura, Supaul, Birpur, Murliganj and Nirmali. These places have retail shops for all kinds of goods, medicines, foodstuff, etc. The value of stock-in-trade of individual shops varies widely from Rs. 500 to Rs. 50,000. These retail dealers get their commodities from mostly local wholesalers. During religious festivals and *melas* the retail business increases enormously. Shops for *pan, bidi,* cigarette, footwear, cosmetics, hot food are on the increase.

It is a peculiar fact that even big villages with a population of more than several towns and townships will not have proper retail shops. In this respect this district is different from most of the other districts in the State where at least there are one or two good retail shops in the townships.

The hawkers play an important role in the retail trade of the district. They sell comparatively cheaper articles of daily use, viz., fruits, sweetmeats, lozenges, cheap utensils, toys, bangles and a number of other articles of daily use. Utensil hawkers generally use small ponies for carrying the load and they are very popular in rural areas.

FAIRS AND MELAS.

Fairs and *melas* have been described elsewhere in the text on 'People'.

CO-OPERATION IN WHOLESALE AND RETAIL TRADE.

There is mutual co-operation between the wholesale and retail dealers as their business is inter-dependent. The wholesale dealers supply the goods to the retailers on credit. The retailers repay the amount to the wholesalers after selling the goods. But this credit facility is usually given to reliable and trusted retailers. Credit facility is not given in gold and silver business. Perishable goods are also not normally given such facilities. Government also provide credit facility to some extent to the retailers who run Government controlled Fair Price Shops. Yarn is also supplied on credit to the weavers of the district through Weavers' Co-operative Society.

MODE OF DISSEMINATION OF TRADE NEWS.

Trade news of markets generally spread to the local merchants through letters, daily papers, radio, telephones and telegrams. A marketing section has been opened under the guidance of the Agriculture Department and a District Marketing Inspector and a Price Reporter have been appointed who communicate news regarding trade and commerce to the traders and also the fluctuations of daily rates of the market. They have had so far very little use for the businessmen. It will take quite sometime before they get themselves equipped.

GENERAL.

A study of the trade and commerce trends in Saharsa district brings out a few particular features peculiar to this district. It is found that the trade and commerce of Saharsa district has almost nothing to do with Bhagalpur, the divisional headquarters. Although Bhagalpur is an emporium of textile goods and other commodities, the businessmen of Saharsa do not have much dealings with the tradesmen in Bhagalpur. They have more touch with the importers and wholesalers of Darbhanga. Purnea and Katihar. This is absolutely due to the disadvantages of communications. The railway contact of Bhagalpur means crossing of the river Ganga by steamer and then by railway for the *ghat* section from Mahadeopur *Ghat* to Bihpur, another section from Bihpur to Mansi and then a section from Mansi to Saharsa. This particular route involves several transhipments which are costly and will mean delay and expenditure. The other route from Bhagalpur will be *via* Sahibganj, Manihari, Katihar, Forbesganj and then a road journey. This route is also circuitous and expensive. On the other hand. Purnea has a direct and quicker railway communication route with Saharsa and

Banmankhi. Forbesganj in Purnea district is very well connected with Birpur and some other areas of Saharsa district and carrier trucks carry a lot of merchandise.

It was also observed that want of proper communications hampers the free movement of land produce and other goods from different areas in Saharsa district. Even now quite a few of the *thana* headquarters have only one fair-weather road to the subdivisional headquarters or the district headquarters. The railway communications are extremely meagre and leave out most of the area of the district. Development of roads will be a great help for the growth of trade and commerce. At the moment much of the jute that is grown has to be sold by the producer at a very small price because the transport of the jute to a railway head or to a place from where trucks move and transport of jute by that means will be very costly. Nirmali, a very important trade centre of Saharsa district has very little to do with Saharsa, Madhepura or Supaul. This is also due to the bad communications. Nirmali has very close trade relations with Darbhanga and Samastipur than any of the trade centres in Saharsa district.

There is a vast scope for the development of retail marketing in the interior of the district. The number of *melas* and fairs is not very large although there are one or two *melas* like Singheshwarsthan which attract thousands of people and assure a good outturn of business.

The district has a very great future in jute trade if the marketing of jute could be properly regularised. An enquiry made by the Economic Research Section of the Indian Central Jute Committee, 1963 has come to the conclusion that the average size of the jute grower's holdings is the largest in Bihar at about 6.7 acres as against Assam's average of 5.2 acres and West Bengal's 4.15 acres. The Committee's findings on the holding size as between the districts show Saharsa as having an average of 8.4 acres which is the highest and Midnapur in West Bengal an average of 3.2 acres which is the lowest whereas in Purnea district, which accounts for the bulk of the area under jute in Bihar, Tossa (*Olitorius*) forms 37 per cent of the total acreage, almost the entire land under jute in Saharsa district is sown with the white variety (*Capsularis*). Almost all the jute that is grown in Saharsa district is now exported to Katihar and Calcutta.

It has to be mentioned here that Saharsa district at present has no large industry. With the abundance of bamboo and jute reeds it may be possible, sooner or later, to start a paper factory. But here again the communications must develop further before a paper factory could work profitably. At the present moment the trade and commerce of Saharsa deals mostly with exports of land produce and imports of necessaries of life which are made within the district and pumping out a very large quantity of merchandise to Nepal. The

development of Kosi barrage has definitely brought Nepal much closer to North Bihar. There is no doubt that there is enough trade potential in the district. With absolute security to the people from floods because of the Kosi barrage, irrigation of a vast acreage through Kosi canals, development of the roads and the railways, there is bound to be a tremendous development of trade and commerce.

Primarily an agricultural area the district's assets of jute, bamboo spread over an area of about 50,000 acres, live-stock population, milk-products, fish, etc., could be turned to better use if the communications improved and power were available. It is presumed that there will be financiers both within and outside the State and there will be no difficulty in hiring technical skill. There are also good possibilities of developing some cottage industries like making of lac bangles, tiles, wares of reeds, etc.

Price Control Measures.

Due to the exigencies of the Second World War there was an abnormal rise of the price of certain essential commodities, viz., rice, wheat, cloth, cement, kerosene oil, petrol, etc. It was also necessary to control the supply and consumption for these articles for essential purposes and the State Government along with the Central Government had to follow the policy of controlling the supply of such goods which were absolutely necessary for public and had to see to the proper supply of such articles for essential purposes. In order to check the spiral rise of price of such articles and to stop the rampant black marketing in them, the scheme of the opening of Fair Price Shops in the urban areas was evolved. A buffer service of essential commodities was sought to be built up by the State Government by direct procurement of foodgrains and other articles, stock them in Government godowns and supply them to the Fair Price Shops which were licensed. The system of ration card for the consumer was insisted on where a maximum quota of foodgrains and cloth was laid down for each individual in a family unit. For this purpose a survey of the family units was made and there used to be a constant check for plugging the loopholes.

The Fair Price Shops were started in the then Saharsa subdistrict in the year 1944 for the supply of foodgrains, kerosene oil, cloth, etc. At no stage there was a totalitarian control on such stuffs which had a salutary effect in bringing down the prices of such commodities available outside the Fair Price Shops. Whenever there would be a large supply of the commodities in the market through normal channels, the demand for taking stuffs from the Fair Price Shops would automatically decline. This system continued throughout the war period and is still (May, 1963) continuing in some shape or other.*

* The recent rise in prices has underlined the importance of the F. P. shops. (September, 1964).

During war period Government had also to exercise control over iron and steel, cement and petrol but the supply of these commodities was not made through the Fair Price Shops. These commodities continued to be supplied to the public through their normal agencies but under the restrictions imposed by statutory orders.

Even after the close of the Second World War the control on the essential foodstuff as indicated before has had to continue. The ration card system for drawing commodities had stood the test and was allowed to remain although the demand on the Fair Price Shops becomes more insistent whenever there is an abnormal rise of prices due to short supply or other reasons.*

The control was abolished in April, 1948 but was again enforced shortly. Due to failure of *Hathia* rains in 1951 and 1957 there became acute shortage of foodgrains in the district. The Government opened a large number of Fair Price Shops throughout the district to check the abnormal rise of prices, to regulate the distribution of foodgrains and also to meet the relief operations in the wake of Kosi ravages. At present (May, 1963) there are 19 godowns, 18 Supply Inspectors and one Godown Manager in the district. Besides these a Central Storage Depot is functioning at Saharsa since August, 1962. The total capacity of this depot is 15,000 tonnes. Till May, 1963, the half portion of the depot having 7,500 tonnes capacity has already been constructed and the other portion is under construction. The staff of this godown is manned by the personnel of Central Food Department, Government of India.

Out of the 18 Supply Inspectors, six are posted in Sadar, six in Madhepura, five in Supaul subdivisions and one attached to District Supply and Commerce Section of the Saharsa Collectorate. Their main functions are to handle Government foodgrains, keep strict supervision over the distribution of essential commodities, besides keeping watch on the trend of price of the essential commodities in the market.

At present (May, 1963) the Government godowns in the district are as follows:--

Madhepura subdivision.--Alamnagar, Bihariganj, Chausa, Madhepura, Murliganj and Singheshwar.

Saharsa Sadar subdivision.—Maheshi, Nauhatta, Saharsa and Sonbarsa.

Supaul subdivision.—Birpur, Chhatapur, Janardanpur, Kishanpur, Nirmali, Pipra, Raghopur, Supaul and Tribeniganj.

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* In the later part of 1964 price lines could hardly be checked and the Fair Price shops were helpful to a limited extent.

The following statement shows the number of godowns for storage of Government foodgrains and number of Fair Price Shops functioning in the district of Saharsa since 1957-58 to 1962-63:—

Year.				Number of godowns functioning.	Number of Fair Price Shops.
1957-58	..	..	..	19	669
1958-59	..	..	..	20	652
1959-60	..	..	..	20	615
1960-61*	..	..	..	19	637
1961-62	..	..	..	19	613
1962-63*	..	..	..	20	449

The table below shows the offtake of the Government foodgrains:—

Month.		Year.					
		1957-58.	1958-59.	1959-60.	1960-61.	1961-62.	1962-63.
1		2	3	4	5	6	7
		Maunds.	Maunds.	Maunds.	Maunds.	Maunds.	Quintals.
April	..	Not available.	81,661	15,925	19,419	40.348	3,218
May..	..	Ditto	1,35,686	8,940	37,133	26,573	2,925
June	..	67,709	1,33,787	29,043	1,20,268	18,210	4,559
July..	..	58.468	88.984	38,928	84,784	28,889	4,807
						Quintals.	
August	..	17,863	79.943	55,929	90,921	14,875	7,139
September	..	17,327	78,080	61,460	74,320	21,198	6,540
October	..	27,936	1,15,210	28,918	70,784	13,737	5,800
November	..	24,226	48,072	15,033	46,983	16,949	3,033
December	..	20,669	20,553	9,319	15,576	5,666	1,863
January	..	69,322	9,217	5,738	15,641	8,396	Not available.
February	..	71,118	15,468	15,592	31,486	13,890	Ditto.
March	..	67,357	39,735	23,410	60,713	14,794	Ditto.

* During 1960-61, one of the godowns functioning at Sour Bazar was closed down and during 1962-63, one more godown at Nirmali was added.

The table below shows the receipts of the Government food-grains:—

Month.	Year.					
	1957-58.	1958-59.	1959-60.	1960-61.	1961-62.	1962-63.
1	2	3	4	5	6	7
	Maunds.	Maunds.	Maunds.	Maunds.	Maunds.	Quintals.
April ..	2,900	68,979	13,921	34,221	Nil	4,387
May.. ..	46,426	3,05,361	1,414	68,011	Nil	10,071
June ..	1,19,213	1,96,829	50,686	1,48,219	37,688	15,103
July.. ..	42,319	1,02,177	53,151	2,03,198	1,25,681	21,127
					Quintals.	
August ..	71,640	42,735	9,718	2,44,055	38,576	31,720
September ..	40,558	1,07,895	35,729	28,661	21,898	6,895
October ..	58,548	60,159	27,612	13,035	585	Nil.
November ..	1,51,345	51,896	8,744	11,095	3,270	Nil.
December ..	1.41,234	57,636	13,196	1,985	2,118	Nil.
January ..	93,098	47,712	1,635	1,020	441	Not available.
February ..	41,088	22,702	5,258	396	4,776	Ditto.
March ..	49,577	18,731	21,030	1,937	2,873	Ditto.

Control on other articles.

Sugar.—Control on sugar was imposed in 1944 in the then Saharsa sub-district but it was withdrawn in April, 1948 because the supply position of sugar had much improved. Sugar was brought from foreign countries. There was again scarcity of sugar in 1950 and it was again controlled under Sugar Control Order. In 1953 the control over sugar was suspended and there was no control till April, 1959. The Bihar Sugar Dealers Licensing Order was promulgated in 1959 which continued till 1961 and when the sugar position became satisfactory during the period under review, the control on sugar was withdrawn. Again the Bihar Sugar Dealers Licensing Order, 1963 was introduced in April, 1963. Due to the implementation of this Order, there has been now (May, 1963) a restriction on the sale of sugar. Merchants dealing in sugar more than 50 quintals have now got to obtain sugar dealing licence. Besides under instructions of the State Government the sugar whole-salers have got to be fixed in a specified area and a certain number of retail sugar dealers so that the smooth flow of sugar to the

consumers is maintained in a normal way. The ex-factory price of different grades of sugar has also been fixed by the Central Government and with the addition of reasonable transport and incidental charges and profit up to a maximum of Rs. 2.68 per quintal, duly fixed by the Licensing Authority, it is being supplied to the consumers. There are at present (May, 1963) 50 licensed sugar wholesalers in the whole of Saharsa district.

The licensed dealers get allotment of sugar on their indents direct from the Chief Director of Sugar and Vanaspati, New Delhi on the recommendations of the District Magistrate through the State Government. At present (May, 1963), the allotment of sugar to the district is 18 metre gauge wagons per month.

Iron and Steel.—At present (May, 1963) iron and steel are in short supply. There is one registered iron and steel stockist at Saharsa and for two more stockists (Supaul and Madhipura), the correspondence is being made. Allotment of iron is made by the State Government to the stockist through quota certificate. The stockist submits indent to the Iron and Steel Controller, Calcutta. The supply is irregular.

Cement.—The Bihar Cement Control Order, 1948 was promulgated in December, 1948, which required dealers to obtain licenses and dispose of the stock at controlled rates to permit holders. In 1958, due to satisfactory position of cement, control over the distribution was relaxed. In 1959 the control over distribution of cement was withdrawn. In 1960 due to want of wagon supply, position of cement became uncertain and Government had to introduce the quota system on cement allotment. The selling rate of cement has to be fixed by the Subdivisional Officers concerned. There are at present (May, 1963) about 36 cement licensees in the district and the present quarterly quota of the district is 720 metric tonnes for quarter II|63 (April—June) or 30 metre gauge wagons. In every quarter I/63 (January—March), the district quota was 360 metric tonnes or 15 wagons. There is difficulty in wagon movement and it has been observed that the allotted quota of cement is not being despatched by the factories concerned. The position regarding quarterwise allotment and receipt of cement is given below:—

Name of quarter.	Allotment in wagons.	Receipt in wagons.
Quarter I/61	39	14
Quarter II/61	34	12
Quarter III/61	34	13
Quarter IV/61	34	13
Quarter I/62	23	9
Quarter II/62	25	10

Hence there is acute shortage of cement in the district.

Kerosene oil.—The Bihar Kerosene Oil Control Order was promulgated in October, 1948 in the then Saharsa sub-district to regulate the supply and distribution of kerosene oil. Till 1951 the supply of kerosene oil was scarce and there was full control on it. In 1952 due to foreign supply the position somewhat improved and in 1953 the control on kerosene oil was withdrawn and since then supply position as reported, remained satisfactory till November, 1962. Consequent upon the Chinese menace on the borders of our country kerosene oil again became scarce and there was a spiral rise in price. After the increase in tax on kerosene oil, the price of kerosene oil increased all the more and the position for the time being became acute. Hence, the Government had to promulgate Bihar Kerosene Oil Control Order, 1963. Under this order every kerosene oil agent and dealer has to display a signboard at a conspicuous place of his shop mentioning therein the past price and the present (May, 1963) price of kerosene oil which includes the tax, i.e., 7 nP. per bottle of 3|4 litre in superior kerosene oil and 3nP. in inferior kerosene oil. Formerly it was being sold at the rate of 25 nP. per bottle of 20 oz. and now (May, 1963) at the rate of 31 nP. Inferior kerosene oil is generally not in demand by the consumers. At present (May, 1963) there are 11 wholesale agents and innumerable retailers in the district.

Coal.—The Bihar Coal Control Order was promulgated in October, 1947, in the then Saharsa sub-district. Four classes of coal, i.e., for oil industries, food industries, fuel coke and for brick burning were allotted to the district. The dealers of softcoke (fuel) and brick burning coal had to obtain licence and the distribution was made on permit. On account of shortage of wagons, the supply particularly of brick burning coal could not be regularised. In April, 1954 Saharsa was made an independent district and during 1956 Bihar Coal Control Order was amended which abolished the permit system which existed prior to 1956. After amendment some relaxation was made. Before the amendment, quota of supply had to be fixed and the distribution was on the basis of unit system but the amendment changed this also.

From 1959 the State Government ordered to allot another class of coal, viz., S. S. I. (Small-Scale Industries) to Z. B. R. dealers (soft coke). From 1960 due to scarcity of wagon supply, coal scarcity is being felt in the district, to remove the scarcity road licence was issued for transporting coal by road and at present (May, 1963) there are 3 road licensees. At the end of 1962 the Government introduced a new measure which is still (May, 1963) in vogue. The new measure is that to check the failures in the lifting of coal quota allotted to the different licensed coal dealers, the Government have had asked them to furnish agreements and a security deposit of Rs 100 by the licensees and Rs. 1,000 by the agents at the State-

level which are none in the district of Saharsa. Besides the coal licensees have also got to furnish the names of their respective colliery agents prior to the allotment of coal to them so that the quota allotted may not remain unlifted.

The monthly quota for the district has been fixed by the State Government which is 35 wagons of Z. B. R. and three wagons of S. S. I. (soft coke). There are two types of coal dealers in the district, namely, the coal dealers affiliated to the Bihar State Co-operative Marketing Union, Limited, Patna, and the other dealers not so affiliated. There are five dumps affiliated to the Bihar State Co-operative Marketing Union, Limited, in the district for the distribution of B. R. K. coal. The stock position of these dumps together with likely arrivals of coal during the months of April and May, 1963, as per pending programme, and the maximum average during the last four years are noted below:—

Name of places.	Closing stock on 31st March 1963 (in tons).	Likely receipts during April and May, 1963 as per pending programme (in tons).	Total stock available for sale (in tons).	Sale during the last four years. Maximum (in tons).	Average (in tons).
1	2	3	4	5	6
Saharsa ..	3,151	1,900	5,051	2,518	1,700
Supaul ..	867	600	1,467	1.413	1,000
Madhepura ..	2,509	160	2,669	1,996	1,000
Murliganj ..	1,046	300	1,346	1,429	640
Bihariganj ..	997	660	1,657	1,629	1,000

From the figures mentioned above it appears that the stock position of B. R. K. coal is satisfactory in the district.

The stock position of different categories of coal for January—March, 1963 is given below for the district of Saharsa*:—

Year	Month.	Categories of coal and stock position in quintals. Z.B.R.	S.S.I.	Rubble.	Stock.	Number of licensees.
1	2	3	4	5	6	7
1963	January ..	8,948	9.054	11,393	16,615	32
	February ..	6,672	7,794	12,950	20.928	32
	March ..	3,319	7,148	9,836	30,335	32

* Source.—District Supply Office, Saharsa.

Though the district has got 35 wagons of Z. B. R. and three wagons of S. S. I. coal monthly quota, it has never been regularised due to the difficulty in wagon movement which is being felt since 1959. The coal is being sold now-a-days at the rate of Rs. 2.68 per maund as against Rs. 2.50 in 1961.

Trade Associations.

Associations and organisations of traders and merchants play a necessary and important role in the community's life. These associations have been formed to foster the interests of businessmen but they cannot also ignore the interests of consumers. In this district growth of some trade associations is recent.

Some of the Trade Associations of the district are listed below:—

(1) *Vyapar Mandal,* Saharsa,

(2) *Vyapar Sangh,* Supaul,

(3) Murliganj *Pat Vyavasayi Sangh,* Murliganj,

(4) *Vyapar Mandal,* Murliganj,

(5) *Vyapar Sangh,* Bihariganj,

(6) *Vyapar Mandal,* Sonbarsa,

(7) Merchants' Association, Madhepura,

(8) *Futkar Kirana Galla Vikreta Sangh,* Nirmali, and

(9) *Kirana Vayapari Sangh,* Nirmali.

Since the price control measures were enforced the importance of Trade Associations has increased. A large number of Acts have been passed and regulations framed and it is not possible for a petty businessman to know their implications. The Associations form the link to help them in the interpretation of the law and also to guide them if they commit any breach. Such associations also take up their causes to the local officials and try to get their grievances redressed.

Vyapar Mandal, Saharsa.—It was founded in 1957 and was registered in the same year. At present (May, 1963) it has 200 members and the membership fees are Rs. 3 and Rs. 10 per annum. The executive committee of the *Vyapar Mandal* consists of a Chairman, a Vice-Chairman, a Secretary and eighteen members. The duration of the committee and membership is of one year but for the last two years there has been no election and the same executive committee which was formed in 1961 is still functioning. It is affiliated to the Bihar Chamber of Commerce, Patna.

Vyapar Sangh, Supaul.—It is functioning, since 1959 and was registered in 1960 under the Societies Registration Act of 1960. At present (May, 1963) it has got 100 members and Rs. 5 is the usual charge for the membership per annum. It has got an executive committee consisting of one Chairman, a Vice-Chairman, a Secretary and 16 members. This is also affiliated to Bihar Chamber of Commerce, Patna.

Murliganj Pat Vyavasayi Sangh, Murliganj.—It started functioning with effect from 9th April, 1962. The managing committee with eleven members was originally formed in April, 1962 which was reconstituted on 7th April 1963 with thirteen members. The *Sangh* was registered under Societies Registration Act under Section 21 (1960). The *Sangh* is affiliated with the Bihar Chamber of Commerce, Patna.

Any merchant dealing with jute transaction can be a member of the *Sangh* on payment of an annual fees of Rs. 5. During 1962-63 the number of members was 46 and at present (May, 1963) the number is 24 only.

Vyapar Mandal, Murliganj.—It is functioning since 1st January, 1959. It has got at present (May, 1963) 118 members and Rs. 5 is charged as annual subscription from its members. There are 11 members in its managing committee. The *Vyapar Mandal* is affiliated with the Bihar Chamber of Commerce, Patna.

Besides there are several other Trade Associations which have already been mentioned. Almost all the Trade Associations provide facilities to their respective members. The facilities provided by these Associations are generally in getting the wagons for which they make correspondence with railway authorities and at several places like Murliganj, Bihariganj, Nirmali, etc., the number of wagons have been increased.

WEIGHTS AND MEASURES.

Weights and Measures are essential tools for the exchange of goods. In Saharsa district weights and measures of great diversities were in use as for example a seer varied from 80 to 90 *tolas*. The Bihar Weights Act, 1947, came into force in the then sub-district of Saharsa in 1951. Under notification this Act received assent of the Governor on 29th April, 1947 and the assent was first published in the *Bihar Gazette* on the 14th May, 1947.

In April, 1954 Saharsa became an independent district and to root out the diversities, confusion and uncertainty among traders the State Government enforced Bihar Weights and Measures (Enforcement) Act of 1959 in the whole State of Bihar. Up to the 15th October, 1962, the Bihar Weights and Measures (Enforcement) Act, 1959, was enforced in the Notified Areas of the district, i.e., Saharsa, Supaul, Madhepura and Murliganj. In other area, Bihar Weights Act, 1947 was enforced. The only Inspector of Weights and Measures posted at Madhepura had been doing the replacement of metric weights, seizure of unauthorised weights, verification work, etc., in these areas. During the course of market inspection the publicity work was being done by the said Inspector. Another Inspector of Weights and Measures was posted in the month of February, 1962 at Saharsa. The areas of Supaul subdivision were divided in between the two Inspectors and they had been doing the enforcement and verification work in the markets.

In August, 1962 the District Inspector of Weights and Measures was posted at Saharsa. Since then the publicity, propaganda and training of metric system are being persuaded in both the urban and rural areas mainly by the District Inspector of Weights and Measures. It is also the duty of the District Inspector of Weights and Measures to visit the Community Development Blocks off and on to train the Village Level Workers, Supervisors, Organizers and other staff in the metric system so that they may propagate the metric system among the rural folk. Publicity and propaganda have also been made in some of the *Gram Panchayats*, *hats* and *melas*. About 8,000 persons in villages and markets, so far, have been made acquainted with the metric system. In course of publicity and propaganda work conversion tables have been distributed in the urban and rural areas.

A drive to enforce the standard weights and measures was started in the district by the District Inspector of Weights and Measures and thus seizure of unstandard weights and scales was made in markets, such as, Saharsa, Supaul, Madhepura, Murliganj, Bihariganj, Simrahi, Birpur, Singheshwar, Bariahi, Saurbazar, Sonbarsa, Nirmali, Pipra, etc., by the Inspectors under the supervision of the District Inspector of Weights and Measures. During the same period replacement work was also done in the above said markets. Now (May, 1963) in almost all the markets the replacement and the use of metric weights is found to be quite satisfactory.

Considering the national emergency period the main attention was diverted towards the collection of Government revenue on account of verification and stamping of weights and scales. The total revenue collected during the year 1962-63 was Rs. 8,296.57 by the Inspectors of the respective areas.

In the district there had been two dealers in weights and measures—one at Madhepura and the other at Saharsa and as such the merchants and the common mass had great difficulty in having the standard weights and measures specially in Supaul subdivision. With a view to remove these difficulties three more dealers, i.e., one at Supaul, one at Nirmali and one more at Saharsa were sanctioned licenses to sell the standard weights and measures. Hence the total number of dealers at present (May, 1963) is five in the district.

During the course of inspection if the breaches of the Act are noticed and the cases are fit for prosecution, the prosecutions are forwarded.

CHAPTER VII.

COMMUNICATIONS.

History.

Roads.

The history of the communications of Saharsa district till 1954 when it was a part of Bhagalpur district has to be traced from the authoritative literature, blue-books, maps and various reports. The testimony of the older generation is also relevant. The vagaries of Kosi river, changes in her course and floods had severely affected the communications, roadways, railways and waterways. An early picture of the communications will be found in the *Final Report of the Survey and Settlement Operations in Bhagalpur District,* 1902–1910 by P. W. Murphy:—

"North of the Ganges a road runs from Lattipur Factory to Madhipura *via* Kishanganj, a distance of 50 miles. But this road has been so cut up by the Kosi floods that there are now 21 gaps between Phulaut and Madhipura. The other important roads in the north are those from Madhipura to Supaul, 21 miles, Madhipura to Sonbarsa, 17 miles, Supaul *via* Partabganj to Birpur on the Nepal frontier, 37 miles, Gopalpur Ghat on the Monghyr boundary west of Supaul to Keotgaon and Purnea boundary *via* Parsarma and Singheshwar, 36 miles, Nirmali to Pratabganj, 25 miles, Supaul *via* Pipra and Pratabganj to Balua, 37 miles, Mahisi *via* Supaul and Bhaptiahi to Kobauli, 49 miles. In recent years many new bridges have been constructed over the rivers in the north of the district at the points where they are crossed by the principal roads. In Kishanganj and Bihpur *thanas* there are practically no roads and in Colgong the beds of the *nalas* which are streams in the rainy season, are used as roads in the cold weather. Many of the roads in the district were constructed during the famine of 1872-73 at the expenses of the Darbhanga estate, which was then under the management of the Court of Wards."*

Mr. J. Byrne, I.C.S., has also made a reference to the roads in the *Bhagalpur District Gazetteer* (1911) which is as follows:—

"North of the river, there are no metalled roads. The main route is Lakhipur to Madhipura *via* Jhurki and

* *Final Report on the Survey and Settlement Operations in the Bhagalpur District,* 1902—1910, p. 8.

Phulaut, a distance of 43 miles. A continuation of this *via* Singheswarsthan, 21 miles long, leads to Supaul. From Supaul a road runs north-east *via* Pratabganj to Birpur on the frontier, a distance of 45 miles. Another runs from Supaul *via* Bhaptiahi to Kanauli which also is on the Nepal frontier. There are routes across towards Purnea district, one *via* Singheswarsthan and Dhalesori to Keotgaon; another *via* Murliganj from Singheswarsthan. But these are impassable except in the end of the cold season and the early part of the hot weather. They are largely within the area subject to the devastations of the Kosi and it is practically impossible to keep them up satisfactorily".*

But the map of Bhagalpur district in the *Final Report on the Survey and Settlement Operations in the Bhagalpur District*, 1902—1910, clearly shows that there was a metalled road from Shahpur Chaumukh to Madhepura. This was the only metalled road in Saharsa district according to the map.

It is gathered although the roads were not metalled, they were planted with a fine-arboriculture. The common species of trees on either side were mangoes and banyan. The conveyances were bullock-carts, *dolis*, ponies and elephants. Elephants were in great demand owing to the marshy patches and breaks on the roads. The roads though unmetalled and dusty served their purpose quite well. This area was connected with the districts of Bhagalpur, Purnea, Darbhanga and Nepal border by good *kutcha* roads. Singheswarsthan temple used to be visited by thousands of people although it was connected by *kutcha* roads.

A particular feature of communications was the series of private and public *bandhs* (embankments) that used to be put up by the Government, the *zamindars* and the people from time to time to save particular areas from Kosi floods. Many of these *bandhs* used to give way if there was a severe flood. But some of the *bandhs* did their work well and gave security for a prolonged time. They were also used as roads. One such *bandh* was known as *Birbandh*. Tradition associates one Hindu King Lakshman II about the end of the twelfth century with the construction of this *bandh*. Some say it was constructed by one Bir. It is, however, not known who this Bir is. The *bandh* was an earthen embankment, some twenty to thirty feet high at places and some 50 miles long. The *bandh* ran from the foot of the outer range of the Nepal hills southwards. It was constructed at a distance of six to about eight miles from the western embankment of the Kosi and had stopped the encroachment of the river westward. The object of the embankment was to cut off the spill of the Kosi from the Tiljuga, Dhimra and other rivers.

* *Bhagalpur District Gazetteer* (1911), p. 184.

in this area. *Birbandh* was noticed by Buchanan Hamilton. It was probably the dividing line between Bengal and Tirhut in the middle ages.

Railways.

The *Final Report on the Survey and Settlement Operations in the Bhagalpur District,* 1902–1910 (published in 1912) mentions: "Another branch of the Bengal and North-Western Railway–the Samastipur-Pratabganj Branch enters the district at Nirmali and runs due east to Pratabganj, a distance of 24 miles. Previous to the year 1904 this line ran up to Kanwa Ghat on the Kosi river, from which place passengers were ferried in country boats belonging to the Railway Company, to Anchara Ghat on the opposite side of the river in Purnea. Anchara Ghat in turn was connected by rail with the Debiganj-Katihar Branch of the Eastern Bengal State Railway. But the portion of the line between Debiganj and Anchara Ghat was so often breached by the Kosi floods that all attempts to keep it in repair were given up in 1904, and since then the portion of the line between Pratabganj and Kanwa Ghat has also been abandoned. The line now ends at Pratabganj. In 1905 a railway was constructed from Mansi, a station on the Barauni-Katihar Branch of the Bengal and North-Western Railway to Bhaptiahi on the Samastipur-Pratabganj Branch of the same line–a distance of 60 miles, of which 40 lie in Bhagalpur. The portion of Monghyr district through which this passes is a marshy tract, and a large expenditure on bridges and high embankments was necessary to secure the safety of the line. It passes through the centre of the rice-growing tract of north Bhagalpur, viz., *thanas* Bangaon and Supaul. A large export trade in rice is carried on from this tract, and formerly all the grain had to be carted by road to Bhaptiahi and other stations. The construction of the new line has provided greatly increased facilities for this trade.

A branch line has been constructed from Saharsa Station on this line to Bodhama Ghat *via* Madhipura–a distance of 18 miles."*

The relevant portion of *Bhagalpur District Gazetteer* (1911) dealing with railway lines of this area is quoted below:–

"North of the river parallel to the Nepal Frontier this same company (i.e., the Bengal and North-Western Railway Company) has a line from Nirmali *via* Raharia, Bhaptiahi and Pratabganj to Balua. Formerly this line went on to Khanwa Ghat and a ferry boat connection was maintained with Anchara Ghat Station on the Eastern Bengal State Railway system on the Purnea side of the Kosi. Owing to the difficulties of

* *Final Report on the Survey and Settlement Operations in the Bhagalpur District*, 1902—1910, p. 7.

crossing, the through traffic was always inconsiderable and of late years, the *ghat* lines have been abandoned on each side. The bridging of the Kosi between Katarea and Kursela stations opened up the unbroken connection between Samastipur and Katihar and so drew all traffic away from the frontier route.

A cross-link from north to south between Bhaptiahi and Mansi (in Monghyr district) *via* Supaul with a branch line to Madhipura, has opened up this northern portion of the district, which was hitherto inaccessible at times. Since its opening Bhagalpur as a district enjoys exceptional railway facilities. On the north bank there are now about 120 miles of line open. In the event of a widespread failure of crops, the value of these lines north of the river could not be over-estimated. They are all on the metre gauge."*

It will so appear that this area was connected with Purnea, Monghyr, Bhagalpur and Darbhanga districts by rail-route also. It seems that there was no regular steamer or boat service connecting places of Saharsa district with those of Bhagalpur or other districts. But cargo-laden boats used to move about.

EFFECT OF KOSI FLOODS.

The *Final Report on the Survey and Settlement Operations in the Bhagalpur District*, 1902--1910, mentions: "The river Kosi lies for the most part in Purnea District and joins the Ganges near Patharghat. The changes in its course, however, have considerably affected North Bhagalpur, the whole of the eastern portion of which is liable to inundations, the usual effect of which is to increase the fertility of the soil. The whole of the north of the district bears signs of having been subject to the action of this river at some time or another. Its action in the process of soil formation has already been alluded to in describing the characteristics of Kishanganj *thana*. The deposit of silt which it leaves is particularly suited for growing rice. The positions of former channels or *'dhars'* as they are called are generally marked by deposits of sand. East of Pratabganj are to be seen the remains of villages which have been suddenly flooded by the Kosi and abandoned by their inhabitants. They are now covered to a depth of several feet with sand, rendering the houses uninhabitable and the lands unfit for cultivation."**

Major Rennel had shown the course of the river in his map in 1781 and from Dr. Buchanan Hamilton's report in 1807—13 it appears that the river was passing through almost the same direction.†

* *Bhagalpur District Gazetteer* (1911), pp. 181-82.

** *Final Report on the Survey and Settlement Operations in the Bhagalpur District*, 1902—1910, p. 4.

† For details *see* the revised *District Gazetteer of Purnea*, 1963.

During the last one century the course of the river has been drifting towards west and in 1850 Nathpur, a great commercial centre was washed away along with obviously several land communications. There were also floods of the other rivers creating havoc with the communications of the area.

The acute period of Kosi ravages in this district is 1905 to 1952. The Kosi attacked East Madhepura near about 1920 and floods recurred there regularly up to 1938. After 1938 it moved towards West Madhepura and Supaul subdivision. The course of Kosi turned towards Saharsa subdivision in later years. Details of the vagaries of Kosi river will be found elsewhere.

The Kosi floods were almost regular from 1938 to 1944 and used to affect various areas and particularly Dharhara police-station area. Owing to the ravages of the floods the subdivisional headquarters had to be shifted to Saharsa, a small village but in a less vulnerable area. The headquarters came back to Supaul several years after as has been mentioned elsewhere. There was a very heavy flood in 1948 affecting a very large area including Dugmara, Supaul, and Bangaon police-stations. This flood created havoc with the economy of the district as important places like Sonbarsa, Nirmali, Sourbazar, Madhepura, Singheshwar Asthan, etc., were affected. But worse floods followed in 1951 and 1952. The details have been mentioned elsewhere. As a result of these floods railway communications were breached, roads were rendered useless, culverts and bridges affected and vast tracts of land were put under a thick layer of sand. Fertile lands were rendered into wilderness infected with *kans* and *pater*. Shrubs and jungles grew where there were fertile lands. Village communications were mostly shattered and a large number of villages were kept water-logged for most of the year due to the topography, low lands and marshes. Temples, trade centres and in some cases even villages have vanished. It is no wonder that the communications were one of the largest casualties of the Kosi floods. Kosi control schemes have been covered elsewhere. It may just be repeated here that the scheme first mooted in 1953 for harnessing Kosi was taken up actively only in 1955 year and now Kosi barrage is an accomplished fact. Now Kosi floods are controlled and the vast volume of water that used to spill and create havoc is now to be utilised in irrigating in Nepal and some districts of Bihar including Saharsa.

A report of Swami Sahjanand Sarswati, a Kisan leader after a tour in Kosi-affected areas was published in the *Searchlight*, dated 14th November, 1947 as quoted in Sri Laliteshwar Mallick's book *Kosi*. A portion of his report dealing with communications is quoted below:—

"I have just returned after a week's tour in the area of North Bhagalpur ravaged by the wild Kosi, but now left by

it to take care of itself. This area of 200 to 300 square miles.......... lies on the border of Nepal territory with its population of two lacs of people, with lacs of acres of its best land lying waste and fallow and covered with jungles, with no railways and telegraph offices, with no roads worth the name, with a few post offices in name only as no letter from outside will reach there generally within less a week........ the nearest railway station being at not less than 25 miles' distance, no leaders and officers dare go there unless they are made to. The bullock-cart is only conveyance in the absence of pony or an elephant. They say, the road to hell is all torture. I don't know but I am sure it is not worse than the one that exists there, with deep ditches at short intervals and full of mud and stagnant water. They are impassable even for a man, let alone a cart."*

This description is not far from truth. In 1940 in connection with the Waste Land Reclamation Scheme the Editor of this Gazetteer had to visit Supaul area several times. The journey from Mansi to Supaul had to be done by railway, boat, trolly and on foot. It was a very difficult problem to transport the tractors and the heavy machineries because there were hardly proper roads. Saharsa, the headquarters of the sub-district did not even have one mile of metalled road. It was also observed that the arboriculture on the roadsides and many of the famous mango orchards of the district had been completely uprooted. Within a mile of Supaul the *kans* and *pater* jungles were the abode of hundreds of deer, wild boars, etc. It was extremely difficult to carry out proper repairs to the roads. Road materials had to be brought from outside and the Kosi-ridden villages hardly provided the proper labour force.

The problems of the communications could hardly be met by the Local Boards of Madhepura and Supaul. The headquarters of the district was at Bhagalpur and there were no activities of the Public Works Department in this district before 1947, so far as roads were concerned. It is only after Saharsa was created into a sub-district, the Saharsa District Board was constituted in 1948 and some improvement was possible.

It may be pointed out that the Kosi flood had one good effect. During the rainy season when the area was flooded, the communications from Murliganj to Madhepura or other places became very easy by boat and commodities for trade and jute, bamboos and food-grains were transported from Murliganj to Sahebganj and other places by boat. The cost on water transport was very low and so trade developed in the areas in those months. But after the rainy season or when the flood was over the communication was miserable.

* As quoted in the book *Kosi* by Laliteshwar Mallick, pp. 144-45.

A man had to cross seven *dhars* (viz., Benga, Baluaha, Loran, Chauri, Budhma, Manikpur and Gumti) while going to Madhepura from Murliganj.

PRESENT COMMUNICATIONS.

Roads.

The roads may now be classified as Public Works Department roads, District Board roads and village roads. The statistics of village roads managed by Gram Panchayats are not available, but from our investigation it was found that there are only a few village roads of worth the name. From communication point of view they are of little value as during the rainy season almost all the village roads become unserviceable.

District Board roads.—The Bhagalpur District Board was not in a position to improve the roads of this area and the communication by road was deplorable. There was a great demand for a separate District Board for this area. As a result the Saharsa District Board was constituted in 1948 and since then attempts have been made to improve the roads under its management. The total number of the District Board roads is 91. The total length of the metalled and the unmetalled roads is about 14 and 812 miles respectively. Only two roads, one in Supaul town and the other road from Madhepura to Jenna are metalled and the rest are *kutcha*. Out of the abovementioned *kutcha* roads the following roads have practically no trace because they fall within the two Kosi embankments and are badly affected by the Kosi floods:—

Name of the roads.			Mileage.
1. Siami to Kamalpur	..	..	7
2. Jhitki to Bhabtiahi	..	..	11
3. Supaul to Jhitki ..	..	..	19
4. Kunauli to Pachpararia	..	..	10
5. Khokhnaha to Marauna	..	..	10
6. Nirmali to Tharbhitta	..	..	7
7. Raharia to Chandpirar	..	..	8
8. Kunauli to Narpatpatti	..	..	4
9. Dagmara to Narpatpatti	..	..	4
	Total	..	80

The roads are not liable to be improved in the circumstances as they, being within the two Kosi embankments, are exposed to Kosi flood every year.

There are only a few good District Board roads from communication point of view. They are as follows:—

(1) *Gopalpurghat to Chakmaka.*—This road connects Saharsa with Darbhanga and Purnea. It is a *kutcha* road and is 40 miles long. It is a fair-weather road and jeepable. At present there is no bus service (May, 1963) on this road.

(2) *Mahisi to Kunauli.*—It is a 50-mile long *kutcha* road which runs up to Nepal border (at Kunauli). It is a jeepable and a fair-weather road but no bus service plies on this road.

(3) *Madhepura to Mora.*—It is an eighteen-mile long *kutcha* road connecting Sonbarsa and Alamnagar police-stations with Madhepura. The road is discontinued at three places, viz., Sukhasandhar (one mile from Madhepura), Narahia Dhar (14 miles from Madhepura) and Boarighat (16 miles from Madhepura). In the rainy season this road becomes unserviceable. It is a fair-weather road but without any bus service.

(4) *Supaul to Singheshwar Asthan.*—It is about 17 miles long *kutcha* road. Singheshwar Asthan is an important religious place where thousands collect on particular festivals. It is also a trading centre. In the months of February and March a big cattle fair lasting for about a fortnight is held here every year. There is a bus service.

(5) *Murliganj to Behariganj.*—Both Murliganj and Behariganj are centres for jute trade and the road linking them is of importance. It is also a fair-weather road. There is no bus service.

From communication point of view the District Board roads serve little purpose as most of them are crossed by many *dhars* (portions criss-crossed by streams) and in rainy season become unserviceable.

The total number of the flood-damaged roads is 25 and for their improvement as well as for repairing of the damaged buildings the Saharsa District Board moved the Government, vide its letter no. 2466, dated 30th October, 1961, for allotment of fund amounting to Rs. 99,300. The matter is under correspondence and due to paucity of its own fund the improvement of the District Board roads has not been taken.

The expenditure of the District Board over the improvement of the roads for the last four years is as follows:—

Year.	Amount in rupees.
1958-59	2,89,067
1959-60	3,02,773
1960-61	2,16,867
1961-62	2,89,506

The District Board roads have a great importance for the economy of the district. But for their very bad condition they have not been playing a vital role. A large number of pockets in the district remain difficult of access and ponies and bullock-carts are the only possible conveyances. Elephants have become scarce. *Dolis* are disappearing because of want of carriers who are very expensive now. People usually carry their village produce as headload for short distances. Many of the primary and secondary markets have remained undeveloped. The impact has been discussed elsewhere.

As it was found that the resources of the District Board were not adequate to improve the existing roadways, a large number of roads were taken over by the Public Works Department. The chart below shows the road-lengths so far made over by the District Board to the Public Works Department with dates:—

Name of the roads transferred to Public Works Department.	Length.			Date when the road was taken over by P. W. D.
	Mile.	Furlong.	Yard.	
1. District Board road nos. 15 and 16, Bihpur to Birpur.	90	1	4	4th January 1951.
2. Road nos. M-3 and M-6, Madhepura to Murliganj.	14	2	0	4th January 1951.
3. Road no. 20, Supaul to Pipra ..	13	0	0	29th July 1954.
4 Road from Railway approach road near Thakurbari to District Board compound (i. e., a portion of approach road to Government colony).	1	2	110	3rd May 1954.
5. Road no. 17, Saharsa to Madhepura	13	0	0	25th April 1956.
6. Portion of road nos. 17 and 21, Saharsa-Bangaon and Supaul Road.	23	7	0	25th April 1956.
7. Road no. 24, Simrahi to Pratapganj	8	0	0	25th April 1956.
8. Road nos. 17 and 15, Baijnathpur to Sourbazar.	6	0	0	25th April 1956.
9. Road no. M-25, under Union Committee, Madhepura.	1	4	0	3rd November 1956.

Name of the roads transferred to Public Works Department.	Length.			Date when the road was taken over by P. W. D.
	Mile.	Furlong.	Yard.	
10. Road no. S-11, Pipra to Daparkha	8	0	0	12th July 1958.
11. Portion of road nos. M-15 and M-1, Sourbazar to Sonbarsa.	12	0	8½	8th October 1958.
12. Road no. M-39, Behariganj to Kishanganj.	4	2	0	1st September 1959.
13. Road no. M-12, Kishanganj to Chilaunighat, first and a portion of second mile of the road from Kishanganj only.	1	6	0	1st September 1959.
14. Road no. 21, Supaul to Kishanpur	8	0	0	1st September 1959.
15. Road no. M-16, Sourbazar to Patharghat.	6	0	0	1st September 1959.
16. Road no. M-10, Kishanganj to Phulaut.	25	0	0	3rd August 1960.
17. Road no. M-12, Kishanganj to Chilaunighat.	34	0	0	3rd August 1960.
18. Road no. S-13, Bishanpur to Jadia	1	0	0	3rd August 1960.

Roads under Public Works Department.—In this district the total mileage of metalled roads under Public Works Department up to May, 1963 is only 147 miles out of which 132 miles of roads were metalled during the First Five-Year Plan period and the rest during the Second Five-Year Plan period. The statement given below shows the details of the roads taken up and completed during the First and Second Five-Year Plans and also the roads to be taken up during the Third Five-Year Plan:—

Name of the road.	Total mileage.	Mileage of the road completed.	Mileage of road under improvement.
First Five-Year Plan.			
1. Bihpur-Birpur Road (1st to 8 miles fall under Bhagalpur district).	80	57	13
2. Madhepura-Murliganj Road	14½	13½	1
3. Supaul-Pipra Road	13	10	3
4. Saharsa New Government Colony Road ..	6½	6½	..
5. Saharsa Madhepura Road	14	12	2

Name of the road.	Total mileage.	Mileage of the road completed.	Mileage of road under improvement.
6. Saharsa-Supaul Road	24½	21	3½
7. Baijnathpur-Sourbazar Road	5½	5½	..
8. Simrahi-Pratapganj Road	8	6½	1½
Second Five-Year Plan.			
1. Sourbazar-Sonbarsa Raj Road ..	13	11	2
2. Pipra-Tribeniganj Road	6½	..	6½
3. Pratapganj Narpatganj Road ..	9½	..	9½
4. Kishanganj-Behariganj Road	6	..	6
5. Supaul-Kishanpur Road	9	2	7
6. Sourbazar-Patharghat Road ..	7	2	5
7. Mirganj-Jadia Road	14	..	14
8. Kishanganj-Chausa Road	14	..	14
9. Bhagwanpur to Bhimnagar (a part of Bihpur Birpur Road).	5½	..	..
Third Five-Year Plan.			
1. Bangaon to Mahisi (up to Kosi embankment)	4½	..	..
2. Panchgachhia to Naubatta Road ..	9	..	..
3. Parsarma to Bakaur	4½	..	..
4. Tribeniganj Balua Road *via* Jadia ..	32	..	..
5. Karma to Alamnagar Road	3 miles 2,100 feet.	..	..
6. Chausa to Laulagaon Bijoyghat Road ..	5	..	..
7. Simri-Bakhtiarpur to Sonbarsa Raj Road ..	8 miles 50 feet	..	..
Roads to be constructed under Central Road Fund.			
1. Singheshwar Asthan to Supaul Road ..	18	..	..
2. Tribeniganj to Purnea Border (to be improved from Jadia to Khajuri).	6	..	..
3. Simrahi to Bhabtiahi	8	..	..

A short description of the roads completed or taken up during the First and Second Five-Year Plans is given below:—

(1) *Bihpur-Birpur Road* starts from Bihpur Bazar in the district of Bhagalpur and terminates at the 79th mile where it meets the Kosi Eastern Embankment in Saharsa district. A portion of the road from the 79th to 87th mile has now fallen within the two Kosi embankments. The entire length of the road is, therefore, 87 miles only out of which the actual length of the portion of road under Saharsa district is 72 miles, starting from 8th mile (from Bihpur), i.e., near about the village Phulaut. The portion up to the 8th mile falls in Bhagalpur district. Out of the entire length only 57 miles of road had been metalled so far and 13 miles of road is under improvement. The rest is *kutcha.* The construction of the culverts is complete but the construction of the major bridges has not yet been completed. This road runs through the entire length of this district, north to south. It passes through the important towns and markets of this district such as Kishanganj, Madhepura, Singheshwar Asthan, Pipra, Simrahi, Karzain, etc. When completed it will be one of the most important artery of the district.

(2) *Madhepura-Murliganj Road* is nearly 15 miles long. It starts from a point on the Bihpur-Birpur Road at Madhepura town and terminates in Murliganj Bazar at a point from where the Purnea link road starts. Murliganj is an important centre for jute trade and is connected with Madhepura by this road. This road is a part of the road connecting Saharsa, the district headquarters, with Purnea town. Metalling and black-topping of the entire road excepting major *dhars* (crossings by river) has been completed.

(3) *Supaul-Pipra Road* starts from Supaul town where Saharsa-Supaul Road ends. It runs up to Pipra Bazar which is on the Bihpur-Birpur Road. It also serves as a by-pass for going to Ganpatganj Bazar which is connected by a District Board road which starts from a point on this road. It is 13 miles long and has been metalled and partly black-topped. There are four major streams crossing the road rendering it unserviceable during the rainy season.

(4) *Saharsa New Government Colony Road* is metalled and has 6½ miles of length. The road runs up to the Government new colony where the quarters for

ministerial staff have been built. The road is within the Saharsa Notified Area. This is an important road for Saharsa town.

(5) *Saharsa-Madhepura Road* connects Saharsa, the district headquarters, with Madhepura town. It starts where Saharsa-Supaul Road begins and ends on the Bihpur-Birpur Road at Madhepura town. The length of the road is about 14 miles out of which the length of 12 miles of road had been metalled. The construction of the bridges over the major streams is in progress. It passes through Baijnathpur and Methai Bazar.

(6) *Saharsa-Supaul Road* connectes Saharsa with Supaul town. It begins from the starting point of Saharsa-Madhepura Road and ends at a point where Supaul-Pipra road starts. The total length of the road is 24.5 miles out of which 21 miles of road had been metalled and black-topped and the remaining 3 miles of road is under improvement. Three important roads coming from Darbhanga district meet this road at different places, viz., one coming from Gandaul meets this road near Bangaon, another coming from Partaha meets this road near Panchagachhia, *via* Nauhatta and the third road coming from Gopalpur bifurcates into two parts—one part meeting this road near Parsarma and the other part at Supaul.

(7) *Baijnathpur-Sourbazar Road* starts from Baijnathpur Bazar from a point on the Saharsa-Madhepura Road and ends at Sourbazar from where the Sourbazar-Sonbarsa Raj Road starts. The length of the road is nearly 5.5 miles and the entire road has been metalled.

(8) *Simrahi-Pratapganj Road* connects Simrahi with Pratapganj. It starts from Simrahi Bazar on the Bihpur-Birpur Road and terminates in Pratapganj Bazar from where Pratapganj-Narpatganj Road starts. In Pratapganj Bazar two other important roads—one coming from Tribeniganj Bazar and the other from Chhatapur meet this road. The length of the road is 8 miles out of which only 6½ miles of road had been metalled.

(9) *Sourbazar-Sonbarsa Road* starts from the terminating point of Baijnathpur-Sourbazar Road at Sourbazar and ends on the northern bank of river Tilway, about two miles south-east of Sonbarsa Raj Bazar where Maheshkhunt-Sonbarsa Raj Road meets. Two roads—one coming from Simri-Bakhtiarpur and other from Madhepur meet this road at two places. The length of this road is nearly 13 miles out of which 11 miles have been metalled.

(10) *Pipra-Tribeniganj Road* starts from Pipra Bazar, on the Bihpur-Birpur Road and terminates at Tribeniganj Bazar. It is, in fact, a part of the old Pipra-Daparkha Road. The length of the road is nearly 6.5 miles and is under improvement.

(11) *Pratapganj-Narpatganj Road* starts from the terminating point of Simrahi-Pratapganj Road in Pratapganj Bazar and terminates on the border line of Saharsa and Purnea district and from where the portion of the road in the Purnea district starts and goes up to Narpatganj Bazar. At Narpatganj Bazar Forbesganj-Narpatganj Road meets this road. The length of the road is about 9½ miles and is under improvement.

(12) *Kishanganj-Behariganj Road* starts from the Bihpur-Birpur Road near the village Kishanganj and terminates at Behariganj. It passes through the important villages namely, Gamai, Gorpara and Bishanpur. The total length of the road is nearly six miles and is under improvement.

(13) *Supaul-Kishanpur Road* starts from Saharsa-Supaul Road at Supaul and ends at Kishanpur. The road is crossed by a *dhar*, namely, Gajua. The length of the road is nearly 9 miles out of which 2 miles of road had been metalled.

(14) *Sourbazar-Patharghat Road* starts from the 5th mile of Baijnathpur-Sourbazar Road and terminates at Patharghat. It passes through the villages Sour, Siler, Kamp and Satalpatti. The length of the road is nearly 7 miles out of which 2 miles of the road was metalled.

(15) *Mirganj Jadia Road* begins from Mirganj at 12th mile of Madhepura-Murliganj Road and ends at Jadia. It passes through Mirganj, Rahta, Lakshmipur, Kumarkhand and Jadia villages. The total length of the road is 14 miles and is under improvement.

(16) *Kishanganj-Chausa Road* takes off from the third furlong of the first mile of the Kishanganj Behariganj Road at Kishanganj and terminates at Chausa. It passes through the villages, namely, Nabtota, Dubli, Jogirar, Bagma, Kalasan and Chausa. The length of the road is 14 miles and it is under improvement.

(17) *Bhagwanpur-Bhimnagar Road*, 5½ miles in length, is a part of Bihpur-Birpur Road and starts at the 80th mile of the Bihpur-Birpur Road near village Bhagwanpur. It is a *kutcha* road and it has not been taken up for improvement (May, 1963).

All the roads except Baijnathpur-Sourbazar Road (5½ miles in length) as mentioned above are fair-weather roads and during the rainy season they are not serviceable. This year (i.e., 1963) Pipra-Tribeniganj Road is expected to be metalled and if done, two important places, namely, Tribeniganj and Chhatapur will be connected with Supaul town by road throughout the year. The reason for the roads being unserviceable during rains is mainly the *dhars* which cross most of the roads are filled up with water rendering them unserviceable. Without bridges over them they cannot be serviceable throughout the year.

During the Third Five-Year Plan the roads, namely, Bangaon to Mahisi (4½ miles), Panchgachhia to Nawhatta (9 miles), Parsarma to Bakaur (4½ miles), Tribeniganj to Balua *via* Jadia (32 miles), Karma to Alamnagar (3 miles, 2,100 feet), Chausa to Laulagaon-Bijoyghat (5 miles), are to be metalled by the Public Works Department. Simri-Bakhtiarpur to Sanbarsa Raj Road whose length is 8 miles, 50 feet, falls entirely (except about half a mile in Saharsa district) in Monghyr district and so the metalling of this road is not to be done by the Public Works Office, Saharsa. The three roads, namely, Singheshwar Asthan to Supaul Road (18 miles), Tribeniganj to Purnea Border Road (to be improved from Jadia to Khajuri—a distance of 6 miles only) and Simrahi to Bhaptiahi (8 miles) are to be metalled under the scheme of Central Road Fund.

Expenditure.—The expenditure of the Public Works Department on the improvement of roads and construction of culverts and bridges thereon in this district has been shown in the table below:—

Serial no.	Name of the road or culvert improved or constructed.	Total expenditure (in rupees).
1	Bihpur Birpur Road (improvement from 8th to 80th mile, i. e.. 72 miles of road).	12,57,372
2	Improvement to Madhepura Murliganj Road (14½ miles) ..	10,21,396
3	Improvement to Supaul-Pipra Road (13 miles) . .	10,09,133
4	Improvement to Saharsa-Madhepura Road (14 miles) ..	18,19,012
5	Improvement to Saharsa-Supaul Road (24½ miles) ..	20,96,135
6	Improvement to Sourbazar Sonbarsa Raj Road (13 miles) ..	11.58,417
7	Improvement to Simrahi-Pratapganj Road (8 miles) ..	6.11,987
8	Improvement to Pipra Tribeniganj Road (6½ miles) ..	5,93,610
9	Improvement to Pratapganj-Narpatganj Road (9½ miles) .	1,61,616
10	Improvement to Bihpur-Birpur Road, from 80th mile to Bhimnagar, i. e., 7 miles only.	82,263
11	Improvement to Mirganj-Jadia Road (14 miles) ..	2,64,079

Serial no.	Name of the road or culvert improved or constructed.	Total expenditure (in rupees).
12	Improvement to Bihpur-Birpur Road, from 10th to 15th mile, i.e., 6 miles only.	3,20,049
13	Improvement to Kishanganj-Chausa Road (14 miles) ..	3,72,266
14	Improvement to Bihpur-Birpur Road, from 62nd to 68th mile, i. e., 7 miles.	3,10,450
15	Cost of bridges and culverts over Bihpur-Birpur Road ..	13,86,387
	Roads under Jute-growing Area.	
16	Improvement to Simrahi-Bhagwanpur Road (11 miles) ..	3,73,794
17	Improvement to Sourbazar to Patharghat Road (7 miles) ..	2,52,451
18	Improvement to Supaul-Kishanpur Road (9 miles) ..	2,20,937
19	Improvement to Kishanganj-Beharigani Road (6 miles) ..	2,40,267
	Inter-district Roads.	
20	Metalling and black-topping of Bihpur-Birpur Road (72 miles)	26,31,189
21	Metalling and black topping of Madhepura-Murliganj Road (14½ miles).	9,00,744

The term improvement means metalling of the road and this meaning of the term has been retained throughout the discussion on roads under Public Works Department.

Roads under Notified Area Committees.—The roads under the management of Notified Area Committees in this district are as follows:—

Name of the Notified Area Committee.	Metalled road.	*Kutcha* road.
1. Saharsa Notified Area Committee ..	1½	2
2. Murliganj Notified Area Committee ..	2	8
3. Supaul Notified Area Committee ..	1	16
4. Madhepura Notified Area Committee ..	Nil	2,000 feet.
5. Nirmali Notified Area Committee ..	Nil	18,184 feet.

The condition of the roads under the Notified Area Committees is not satisfactory and the details have been given in the chapter Local Self-Government.

There is no National or State highway passing through the district.

IMPACT OF COMMUNICATIONS ON ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL LIFE OF THE PEOPLE.

The communication facilities in this district are very miserable. There is no proper road yet of some length that is serviceable for the whole year. Almost all the roads are fair-weather roads and

during the rainy season, they become unserviceable. The railway, as will be shown later on, also does not serve the district adequately. There is also no river navigable for the whole year. Hence, from communication point of view this district lags far behind the other districts of Bihar. The chart given below shows the distance of different important places of this district by road as well as their distance from the nearest railway station:—

Polymetrical Table for Saharsa District (By road, viz., shortest route).

Serial no.	Name of the chief public places.	Madhepura.	Saharsa.	Bangaon.	Dharhara.	Nauhatta.	Singheshwar.
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
1	Madhepura (*b*)	0	14	20	28	20	4
2	Saharsa (*a*) ..	14	..	6	14	18	17
3	Bangaon ..	20	6	0	8	13	22
4	Dharhara ..	28	14	8	..	6	30
5	Nauhatta ..	20	18	13	6	..	25
6	Singheshwar ..	4	17	22	30	25	..
7	Sour ..	11	8	13	21	24	18
8	Sonbarsa ..	19	18	18	26	35	29
9	Kishanganj ..	21	31	37	45	41	25
10	Alamnagar ..	28	33	39	47	48	32
11	Beharigani ..	25	39	46	54	47	30
12	Murliganj ..	14	28	34	42	34	18
13	Supaul (*b*) ..	23	24	18	16	12	17
14	Bhimnagar ..	60	64	57	55	50	46
15	Pratapganj ..	36	43	49	44	39	32
16	Nirmali ..	35	37	32	30	34	30
17	Kishanpur ..	22	31	26	23	18	20
18	Chhatapur ..	35	49	55	63	68	31
19	Triveniganj ..	25	31	37	45	34	20
20	Pipra ..	17	25	31	30	23	12
21	Raghopur ..	26	36	42	36	31	22
22	Simrahi ..	27	37	43	37	32	23

(*a*) District Headquarters.

(*b*) Subdivision.

Serial no.	Name of the chief public places.	Sour.	Sonbarsa.	Kishanganj.	Alam-nagar.	Behari-ganj.	Murli-ganj.
1	2	9	10	11	12	13	14
1	Madehpura (b)	11	19	21	28	25	14
2	Saharsa (a)	8	18	31	33	39	28
3	Bangaon ..	13	18	37	35	46	34
4	Dharhara ..	21	26	45	47	54	42
5	Nauhatta ..	24	35	41	48	47	34
6	Singheshwar	18	29	25	32	30	18
7	Sour ..	..	11	25	26	30	25
8	Sonbarsa ..	11	..	18	16	28	30
9	Kishanganj..	25	18	..	9	5	17
10	Alamnagar	26	16	9	..	9	26
11	Behariganj	30	28	5	9	..	12
12	Murliganj ..	30	30	17	26	12	..
13	Supaul (b) ..	27	37	47	51	48	35
14	Bhimnagar	61	69	60	68	56	42
15	Pratapganj	47	68	57	66	52	51
16	Nirmali ..	45	56	62	65	60	51
17	Kishanpur	28	49	45	54	40	33
18	Chhatapur ..	55	60	39	48	34	29
19	Tribeniganj	38	49	39	48	34	23
20	Pipra ..	26	37	38	47	43	30
21	Raghopur ..	38	49	47	56	47	36
22	Simrahi ..	39	50	48	57	48	37

(a) District Headquarters.

(b) Subdivision.

Serial no.	Name of the chief public places.	Supaul.	Bhim-nagar.	Pratap-ganj.	Nirmali.	Kishan-pur.	Chhata-pur.
1	2	15	16	17	18	19	20
1	Madhepura (b)	23	50	36	35	22	35
2	Saharsa (a)	24	64	43	37	31	49
3	Bangaon ..	18	57	40	32	25	55
4	Dharhara ..	15	55	44	39	23	63
5	Nauhatta ..	12	50	30	34	18	68
6	Singheshwar	17	16	32	30	20	31
7	Sour ..	27	61	44	45	35	55
8	Sonbarsa ..	37	69	55	50	49	66
9	Kishanganj ..	47	60	57	52	45	39
10	Alamnagar	51	68	66	65	54	48
11	Behariganj	48	56	52	60	40	34
12	Murliganj .	35	42	34	51	38	29
13	Supaul (b) ..	..	48	28	13	8	35
14	Bhimnagar	48	..	22	32	33	21
15	Pratapganj	28	22	..	26	22	9
16	Nirmali ..	13	32	20	..	13	35
17	Kishanpur	8	33	22	13	..	31
18	Chhatapur ..	35	21	9	35	31	..
19	Tribeniganj	20	35	15	33	19	14
20	Pipra ..	13	30	15	14	14	21
21	Raghopur ..	22	20	9	21	15	16
22	Simrahi ..	23	19	8	20	16	15

(a) District Headquarters.

(b) Subdivision.

Serial no.	Name of the chief public places.	Tribeni-ganj.	Pipra.	Raghopur.	Simrahi.	Distance from the nearest railway station.	Name of the nearest rail-way station.
1	2	21	22	23	24	25	26
1	Madhepura (*b*)	25	17	26	30	0	Madhepura.
2	Saharsa (*a*)	31	25	36	37	0	Saharsa.
3	Bangaon ..	37	31	42	43	6	Saharsa.
4	Dharhara ..	45	39	36	37	14	Saharsa.
5	Nauhatta ..	34	23	31	32	9	Panchgachhia.
6	Singheshwar	20	12	22	23	4	Madhepura.
7	Sour ..	38	26	38	39	4	Baijnathpur.
8	Sonbarsa ..	49	37	49	50	12	Sonbarsa Kutchery.
9	Kishanganj..	39	38	47	48	5	Behariganj.
10	Alamnagar	48	47	56	57	13	Bihpur.
11	Behariganj	34	43	47	48	0	Behariganj.
12	Murliganj ..	23	30	36	37	1½	Murliganj.
13	Supaul (*b*)	20	13	22	23	0	Supaul.
14	Bhimnagar	33	30	20	19	32	Nirmali.
15	Pratapganj	15	18	9	8	28	Supaul.
16	Nirmali ..	33	14	21	20	0	Nirmali.
17	Kishanpur	19	14	15	16	8	Nirmali.
18	Chhatapur	14	21	16	15	29	Murliganj.
19	Tribeniganj	..	7	16	17	20	Supaul.
20	Pipra ..	7	..	12	13	13	Supaul.
21	Raghopur ..	16	12	..	1	22	Supaul.
22	Simrahi ..	17	13	1	..	20	Nirmali.

(*a*) District Headquarters.

(*b*) Subdivision.

From the chart it appears that Bhimnagar, Chhatapur, Pratapganj, Raghopur, Simrahi, Tribeniganj, Dharhara, Pipra and Alamnagar are at a distance of more than 12 miles and less than thirty-three miles from their nearest railway stations respectively. The approach roads from the villages to the railway stations in most cases are *kutcha* and they are unserviceable during the rainy season. For want of communications the cultivators have to sell their produce at a very low price in the neighbouring market. Ghee, milk, fish and foodgrains of this area have to be sold cheap.

Mahisi and Chandrain in Sadar subdivision, Tribeniganj, Chhatapur and Maurna villages in Supaul subdivision are practically inaccessible during the rainy season. Nirmali an important trade centre for jute and foodgrains has no direct communication. It is connected by rail *via* Mansi, Barauni, Samastipur and Sakri (in Darbhanga district) and by road *via* Kosi barrage. Nirmali is only about 16 miles from Supaul town but due to bad communication one has to cover about 100 miles by railway to reach Nirmali. It is due to this fact that the trade of Nirmali is more with Darbhanga district and not with Saharsa district.

Litigation is very costly to the people of Nirmali, Pratapganj, Chhatapur and other places which are distantly connected with their subdivisional towns.

Crimes like dacoity or murder in the inaccessible villages often escape detection. Post-mortem of bodies several days after is not satisfactory for crime investigation. Bad communication is a great hurdle in the way of the administration of justice.

A good number of villages of Sadar and Supaul subdivisions numbering about 300 have fallen within the two Kosi embankments where every year flood occurs and affects the economy of the people. The worst affected blocks in this district whose villages are within the two embankments are Mahisi and Nawahatta, in Sadar subdivision and Nirmali, Kishanpur, Marauna, Supaul and Birpur in Supaul subdivision.

VEHICLES AND CONVEYANCES.

The importance of bullock-carts in the district is the same as it was a century ago. It is only bullock-carts that can be of some help in the rainy season. The actual number of bullock-carts is not available but it is estimated that it will be over ten thousand. In the jute-growing areas particularly on the Murliganj side bullock-carts are the only vehicle for bringing jute from the neighbouring villages to Murliganj Railway Station.

The number of bicycles is increasing but at a very slow speed. Rickshaws have recently been in use in Saharsa, Madhepura and Supaul towns only. Nirmali and Murliganj towns have no rickshaws (May, 1963) obviously due to the *kutcha* roads.

Another mode of conveyance is the two-wheeled vehicle drawn by one horse called *tamtam*. It is generally found in Saharsa, Supaul and Madhepura towns only. But the number as appears from local investigation is decreasing. The four-wheeled horse-drawn carriage is also declining. Previously the *zamindars* had broughams, phaetons and fine horses. *Dolis* and *palkis* are also on the decline. Elephants were very useful before and the *zamindars* and big cultivators had a large number of them. Now with the abolition of *zamindaries* and the introduction of mechanical vehicles, elephants have rapidly declined. There are a few private cars and jeeps besides passenger buses and carrier trucks. The use of horses has declined.

The expansion of roads particularly of the metalled roads has been not very remarkable. Only 147 miles of roads are metalled. The number of trucks, buses, cars, jeeps, etc., which received permits is as follows:—

Year.		Jeep.	Car.	Bus.	Truck.	Tractor.	Van.	Motor cycle.	Auto-rick-shaw.	Total.
1958-59	..	72	25	4	54	13	6	28	..	202
1959-60	..	75	33	6	40	13	3	30	1	201
1960-61	..	43	11	3	36	1	2	16	..	112
1961-62	..	38	11	3	22	2	2	9	..	87
1962-63	..	68	10	3	53	8	2	19	..	163

The above figures show that the total number of the vehicles as mentioned above has decreased in 1962-63 in comparison with that of 1958-59 and 1959-60.

The roads in this district have not been nationalised and only private buses ply on them. The truck traffic is not heavy as most of the roads in the district do not permit this. The names of the roads on which private buses ply are given below:—

Serial no.	Name of the route.				Number of bus services.
1	Saharsa Birpur *via* Madhepura		..	..	2
2	Saharsa-Birpur *via* Supaul	..	.	..	2
3	Saharsa-Bhimnagar *via* Supaul		..	..	2
4	Saharsa-Karjain *via* Madhepura		..	..	1
5	Saharsa Puulaut *via* Madhepura		..	..	1
6	Madhepura-Birpur *via* Pipra	..	..	..	1
7	Madhepura-Karjain	..	..	..	1
8	Madhepura Tribeniganj	..	..	..	1
9	Supaul-Karjain *via* Raghopur	..	..	..	1
10	Supaul-Birpur ..	..	..	..	1
11	Supaul-Tribeniganj	..	..	..	3
12	Supaul-Forbesganj *via* Birpur	..	..	..	1
13	Simrahi-Forbesganj	..	..	..	1

All the bus routes as mentioned are fair-weather routes.

RAILWAYS.

The early history of railways in this district has been discussed separately and hence here only the present structure is given.

The total length of the North-Eastern Railway serving this district is only about 79 kilometres.

The names of the railway stations falling within this district are Sonbarsa Kachery, Saharsa Junction, Panchgachhia, Parsarma, Supaul, Baijnathpur, Methai, Dauram-Madhepura, Budhma, Murliganj, Behariganj and Nirmali.

A branch line of North-Eastern Railway from Mansi runs up to Supaul entering this district at Sonbarsa Kachery Station and passing through Saharsa Junction, Panchgachhia and Parsarma stations. The distance between Sonbarsa Kachery Station and Supaul Station is only 37 kilometres. A branch line of the North-Eastern Railway from Saharsa Railway Station runs up to Purnea Junction passing through Baijnathpur, Methai, Dawram Madhepura, Budhma and Murliganj railway stations of this district. The distance of Saharsa to Murliganj is only 42 kilometres while the distance of Saharsa Junction from Purnea Junction is 99 kilometres. Another branch line of the North-Eastern Railway from Banmankhi Junction (in Purnea section) comes to Behariganj. This line is in Purnea district and only ends at Behariganj Station which is in Saharsa district.

There is another branch line of the North-Eastern Railway from Sakri (in Darbhanga district) which terminates at Nirmali. The distance of Nirmali from Sakri is 51 miles. The entire railway line except one or two miles, is within Darbhanga district.

The important stations for trade purpose are Nirmali, Murliganj, Behariganj, Supaul, Madhepura and Saharsa. The volume of traffic moved and earnings of important railway stations have been given in the chart at the end of the chapter.

There has been no expansion in the railway line in this district. On the contrary the line connecting Nirmali with Supaul and Pratapganj, Kanwa Ghat, etc., has been dismantled due to Kosi floods as discussed elsewhere. A line from Madhepura to Behariganj will be very beneficial. Now one has to go to Banmankhi Junction and then to Behariganj by railway.

The role of railway in the economic life of the district is of great significance. As the roads in the district do not encourage plying of heavy trucks, railway is the only means of communications for trade purpose in this district. The bulk of jute, foodgrains, fish, etc., move out by the railway only.

There is no rail-road communication so far.

Regaring goods and parcel traffic of important railway stations statistics have been given in the chapter on 'Banking, Trade and Commerce' and hence here only passenger traffic needs to be mentioned.

1. *Murliganj Railway Station.*

Month.	1961. Total number of tickets sold.	1961. Total earnings.	1962. Total number of tickets sold.	1962. Total earnings.
1	2	3	4	5
		Rs.		Rs.
January	30,958	20,667	21,219	16,878
February	22 257	18,533	19,963	16,083
March	22,820	18,170	24,863	19,734
April	20,490	15,405	19,764	12,409
May	26,188	18,431	23,408	19,548
June	18,222	13,949	19,436	17,550
July	18,943	14,132	17,529	15,208
August	18,858	13,018	13,695	11,230
September	23,006	19,870	17,579	13,143
October	22,080	15,254	18,440	16,749
November	22,916	17,324	18,035	15,451
December	18,387	15,611	13,847	12,034

2. *Budhma Railway Station.*

Month.	Year. 1960. Total number of passengers.	1960. Total earnings.	1961. Total number of passengers.	1961. Total earnings.	1962. Total number of passengers.	1962. Total earnings.
1	2	3	4	5	6	7
		Rs.		Rs.		Rs.
January ..	3,671	3,354.43	10,567	5,809.55	7,032	3,331.50
February ..	7,546½	4,413.99	9,182	5,715.26	6,853	3,786.57
March ..	6,188	3,620.00	7,910½	4,100.36	7,524½	4,219.14
April	6,593	3,759.07	7,715	4,238.21	7,075	2,908.92
May	5,625	2,753.65	6,550	3,189.49	6,619	4,367.00
June ..	4,451	1,939.02	5,702	3,087.03	6,719	3,979.74
July	3,480	1,506.00	6,147	2,883 00	5,041	2,894.00
August ..	4,436	1,924.00	5,724½	2,471.97	4,738½	2,672.63
September ..	6,361	2,667.25	7,280	3,052.00	6,721	3,382.61
October ..	6,789	4,003.53	7,858½	3,674.59	7,232	3,916.48
November ..	7,079	4,915.00	8,744	477.32	6,697	[illegible]
December ..	6,200	4,053.71	6,168	3,340.37	5,050	[illegible]

3. *Supaul Railway Station.*

Month.	Year. 1960. Total number of passengers.	1960. Total earnings.	1961. Total number of passengers.	1961. Total earnings.	1962. Total number of passengers.	1962. Total earnings.
1	2	3	4	5	6	7
		Rs.		Rs.		Rs.
January ..	N.A.	N.A.	17,314	20,140	16,611	19,517
February ..	21,474	24,380	21,405	22,032	25,707	28,454
March ..	14,975	18,653	17,219	23,239	17,072	23,115
April	16,148	19,804	18,344	23,365	17,586	21,394
May	14,454	17,750	18,399	19,204	20,178	25,524
June ..	12,390	13,777	16,231	23,147	17,103	20,879
July ..	12,950	17,089	17,988	25,248	14,372	24,378
August ..	12,876	19,005	17,669	22,972	17,725	23,711
September ..	17,689	22,712	22,480	39,886	18,920	25,337
October ..	17,565	28,192	18,331	39,080	16,684	22,811
November ..	18,635	23,642	16,018	16,807	13,645	18,356
December ..	20,765	25,236	14,975	18,044	15,934	20,922

4. *Nirmali Railway Station.*

Month.	Year. 1960. Total number of passengers.	1960. Total earnings.	1961. Total number of passengers.	1961. Total earnings.	1962. Total number of passengers.	1962. Total earnings.
1	2	3	4	5	6	7
		Rs		Rs.		Rs.
January ..	13,090	18,041.00	16,276	28,980	10,521	17,312
February ..	21,022	31,157.00	16,186	20,904	12,231	18,807
March ..	17,409	25,380.00	15,216	24,580	13,870	22,000
April	15,355	24,134.00	13,541½	21,513	11,366	17,565
May	13,126½	21,424.00	11,515	17,906	11,301	N.A.
June ..	8,656	11,384.00	9,476	16,171	8,952	16,174
July	6,822	8,743.31	8,256	15,515	6,390	14,466
August ..	5,200	9,929.00	6,244	11,638	3,162	7,111
September ..	5,095	11,926.00	10,167	16,806	6,739	18,250
October ..	8,272	14,412.00	8,087	25,385	8,883	19,908
November ..	14,296½	19,523.00	10,353	17,027	9,678	16,590
December ..	9,535	16,834.00	9,211	12,975	7,800	14,275

5. *Dauram Madhepura Railway Station.*

The average number of monthly passengers (during 1962-63) is 35,551 and the average monthly income from passenger traffic is Rs. 30,024 only. The separate figures yearwise were not available.

It may be pointed out that on these stations, a good number of passengers travel without tickets and so the figures as given do not represent the actual number of passengers travelling.

WATER COMMUNICATIONS.

There is no navigable river in this district. However, country boats of small carrying capacity ply on some of the rivers. The District Board, Saharsa, control 28 public ferries and about 137 free ferries at different important *dhars*, most of them are open only in the rainy season.

The public ferries are settled on an annual fee. The amount of the fees (*jama*) which the District Board, Saharsa, received from the settlement of ferries was Rs. 55,416, Rs. 42,897 and Rs. 55,375 during 1960-61, 1961-62 and 1962-63, respectively. As the *dhars* (streams) are not connected with the river Ganga their utility for trade is very little.

COMMUNICATIONS UNDER THE KOSI PROJECT.

Roads.—The Project administration has constructed a metalled road of 26 miles from Bathnaha to Bhimnagar. A portion of this road measuring about 10 miles beginning from Sonsar to Bhimnagar is within Saharsa district and the rest falls within Purnea district.

There is a barrage over the Kosi river and on its two flanks there are earth dams and flood embankments. The length of the eastern embankment falling within the area of this district is about 65 miles and that of the western embankment is 30 miles. Both the embankments are motorable and serve as means of communication. The embankments also connect this district with Nepal and will play a big role in developing trade relations.

Railways.—The Kosi Project administration has constructed a 76-mile narrow gauge line for their own use. This railway line links Bhimnagar (which is in this district) with various places of Nepal. At present (1963) this railway is mainly used for transporting building materials required for the Kosi Project. Out of the total length, about 16 miles of the railway line is within Saharsa district. The future of this railway tract is not yet decided.

Inspection Bungalows.—The Kosi Project administration has also constructed Inspection Bungalows at Supaul, Madhepura, Bhaptiahi, Chandrain. Nirmali, Kunauli, Karjain, Pipra and Murliganj. In addition to these, there are three Inspection Bungalows at Birpur.

The Kosi Project administration has its own aerodrome, telephone line, and a wireless station at Birpur for its own purpose.

Dak and Inspection Bungalows.

The Saharsa District Board maintains 17 Dak and Inspection Bungalows—

(1) *Saharsa Inspection Bungalow* is situated in the District Board Compound in Saharsa town. It is half a mile from Saharsa Railway Station.

(2) *Bangaon Inspection Bungalow* is 6 miles away from Saharsa and is situated by the side of Saharsa-Supaul Road.

(3) *Chandrain Inspection Bungalow* is situated by the side of Chandrain to Hati and Mahisi to Kunauli Road.

(4) *Madhepura Inspection Bungalow* is situated in the main market of the Madhepura town and on the roadside leading from the railway station to Madhepura Court. It is at a distance of about half a mile from the railway station and 15 miles from Saharsa.

(5) *Murliganj Inspection Bungalow* is situated by the side of Madhepura to Murliganj Road at a distance of ½ mile from Murliganj Railway Station. The distance from district headquarters is 30 miles.

(6) *Kishanganj Inspection Bungalow* is situated by the side of Bihpur-Birpur Road which passes through Kishanganj. Its distance from district headquarters is 36 miles. The mode of conveyance is rail up to Madhepura and therefrom by road route, i.e., by Bihpur-Birpur Road covering a distance of 21 miles.

(7) *Phulaut Inspection Bungalow* is situated at Phulaut on the side of Bihpur-Birpur Road. Its distance from district headquarters is 49 miles. From Saharsa to Madhepura by rail and from Madhepura to Phulaut—34 miles—by Bihpur-Birpur Road is the route to reach here.

(8) *Alamnagar Inspection Bungalow* is situated at Alamnagar by the side of District Board road which runs from Madhepura to Phulaut. It is at a distance of 28 miles from Madhepura—the subdivisional headquarters and 42 miles from the district headquarters.

(9) *Gamharia Rest House* is situated at Gamharia by the side of District Board road running from Supaul to Singheshwar Asthan. It is 11 miles from Supaul town and 35 miles from Saharsa, the district headquarters.

(10) *Supaul Inspection Bungalow* is situated in the town of Supaul and is only half a mile away from Supaul Railway Station. The distance from district headquarters is 24 miles only.

(11) *Pratapganj Inspection Bungalow* is situated at Pratapganj by the side of Jhitki-Pratapganj Road. It is 27 miles from Supaul and 51 miles from Saharsa town.

(12) *Raghopur Inspection Bungalow* is situated at Raghopur by the side of Bihpur-Birpur Road. It is 36 miles from Saharsa and 22 miles from Supaul town.

(13) *Pipra Dak Bungalow* is situated at Pipra by the side of Bihpur-Birpur Road. It is at a distance of 13 miles from Supaul town and 25 miles from Saharsa.

(14) *Kunauli Dak Bungalow* is situated at Kunauli by the side of a District Board road running from Mahisi to Nepal border. Saharsa is about 50 miles from here.

(15) *Chhatapur Dak Bungalow* is situated at Chhatapur by the side of Bishanpur to Birpur Road. It is at a distance of about 36 miles from Supaul town and 49 miles from Saharsa town.

(16) *Tribeniganj Dak Bungalow* is situated at Tribeniganj by the side of Pipra to Daparkha Road. It is at a distance of 20 miles from Supaul town and 31 miles from Saharsa town (by shortest route).

(17) *Baruari Inspection Bungalow* is situated at Baruari and is two miles from Parsarma Railway Station. Its distance from Saharsa town is about 13 miles.

The Public Works Department also maintains a Circuit House at Saharsa. It is situated near the Aerodrome, at a distance of nearly two miles from Saharsa Railway Station. Besides, two rest-sheds, one at Saharsa and the other at Supaul, are also maintained by the Public Works Department.

The Kosi Project Department has also constructed a number of Inspection Bungalows at important places such as Supaul, Madhepura (the building is at present, i.e., May, 1963 under construction), Nirmali, Pipra, etc. There is one Inspection Bungalow, a Circuit House and a Guest House at Birpur, all maintained by the Kosi Project Department. This department has also planned to construct an Inspection Bungalow at Saharsa.

In addition to Inspection and Dak Bungalows there are *dharmasalas* at Nirmali, Saharsa, Supaul, Singheshwar Asthan, Murliganj, Mahisi and Biratpur which provide free lodge for three days. The *dharmasala* of Manikram Baijnath Ram Bajaz at Nirmali is a very spacious and a three-storeyed building. It is gathered that the travellers are, however, not given here rooms to occupy and they have to sleep on the floor. Seven rooms of this *dharmasala* have been occupied by the Government servants for a long time and

some rooms are reserved for those whom the proprietor recommends to occupy. The few remaining vacant rooms are at the discretion of the Manager. The *dharmasala* at present hardly serves the public to a large extent.

POSTAL COMMUNICATIONS.

There are altogether 218 post offices in the district including a head post office at Saharsa. Prior to 1960-61 there was no head post office at Saharsa and the post offices of this district were either attached with Purnea, Darbhanga, Monghyr or Bhagalpur head post offices. Out of 218 post offices 35 post offices including one head post office, 31 sub-post offices and three branch post offices were doing savings bank work during 1962-63. This year, i.e., 1963-64 the branch post offices at Mahisi, Nauhatta and Supaul Bazar are doing savings bank work.

The average number of ordinary letters received and despatched during 1962-63 is 3,05,105 and 2,86,104, respectively. The average number of registered articles despatched during 1960-61, 1961-62 and 1962-63 is 71,297, 45,981 and 65,286, respectively.

The value of money orders issued and paid from 1960-61 to 1962-63 is given below:—

The value of the money orders paid (in rupees)

Year.	Months.					
	April.	May.	June.	July.	August	September.
1	2	3	4	5	6	7
1960-61 ..	2,61,980.90	2,75,244.09	2,21,819.20	1,74,919.94	2,07,298.75	3,20,355.39
1961-62 ..	2,26,078.00	2,26,637.11	2,28,195.41	2,12,428.15	2,42,329.89	2,43,948.63
1962-63 ..	2,36,187.40	2,78,783.94	2,29,871.49	2,98,655 32	3,21,193.78	2,64,591.41

Year.	Months.					
	October.	November.	December.	January.	February.	March.
1	8	9	10	11	12	13
1960-61 ..	2,20,004.20	2,72,059.98	3,52,055.47	2,70,546.29	3,05,479.70	2,93,421.32
1961-62 ..	2,65,349.62	2,03,298.08	2,56,619.39	3,08,374.00	2,60,895.35	2,98,232.54
1962-63 ..	2,68,772.45	1,93,337.19	3,18,517.47	2,76,124.19	3,36,503.73	3,87,078.92

The value of the money orders issued (in rupees).

Year.	—	Months.			
		April.	May.	June.	July.
1		2	3	4	5
1960-61 ..	Value of the money orders.	4,25,306.29	4,41,107.29	4,06,037.00	2,83,620.07
	Postal commission	6,770.70	7,079.60	6,493.20	4,589.20
1961-62 ..	Value of the money orders.	4,38,660.05	4,02,826.68	3,53,786.61	4,22,192.54
	Postal commission	7,034.15	6,441.85	5,675.70	6,778.10
1962-63 ..	Value of the money orders.	4,07,886.17	5,17,531.43	3,78,751.48	4,89,709.62
	Postal commission	6,478.90	8,283.55	6,084.35	7,834.35

Year.	—	Months.			
		August.	September.	October.	November.
1		6	7	8	9
1960-61 ..	Value of the money orders.	5,04,438.04	5,99,620.50	4,32,643.50	6,13,883.03
	Postal commission	8,082.55	9,558.20	6,946.30	9,793.50
1961-62 .	Value of the money orders.	5,40,464.03	5,90,178.43	5,01,572.23	4,09,133.84
	Postal commission	8,619.45	9,461.35	8,082.00	7,517.15
1962-63 ..	Value of the money orders.	5,16,030.49	5,44,683.39	3,85,373.73	4,36,623.00
	Postal commission	8,269.65	8,640.05	6,261.95	7,042.50

Year.	—	Months.			
		December.	January.	February.	March.
1		10	11	12	13
1960-61 ..	Value of the money orders.	6,68,526.29	5,23,985.52	5,71,197.83	6,27,138.36
	Postal commission	10,603.35	8,351.80	9,069.35	9,997.40
1961-62 ..	Value of the money orders.	5,34,575.53	5,39,816.21	4,75,268.96	6,02,171.73
	Postal commission	8,423.55	8,580.45	7,588.45	9,851.05
1962-63 ..	Value of the money orders.	5,47,425.99	4,73,102.62	6,33,679.72	6,15,140.08
	Postal commission	8,754.95	7,528.30	10,129.88	10,055.15

The value of money orders paid and issued relates only those post offices which are attached with the head office, Saharsa, i.e., it excludes the value of money orders paid and issued in respect of Birpur, Bhimnagar, Nirmali, Kunauli Bazar, Sonbarsa, Chausa and Alamnagar sub-post offices which are attached with the head post offices of Purnea, Darbhanga, Monghyr and Bhagalpur districts, though fall with the civil jurisdiction of Saharsa district.

The National Defence Fund Money Order on which money order commission is not charged is in effect with effect from November, 1962. The value of such money orders paid and issued is given below:—

	The value of money orders paid (in rupees).	The value of money orders issued (in rupees).
November, 1962	30	17,390.57
December, 1962	5	4,315.65
January, 1963	390.21	3,381.70
February, 1963	19.50	1,402.68
March, 1963	20.39	1,351.34
April, 1963	172.62	591.18

The figures relate to only those post offices attached with the head post office, Saharsa.

The total miles of postal communication is about 734 miles. The postal organisation has been covered elsewhere.

This district is not adequately served by the Posts and Telegraphs Department. There are many villages which still receive letters after a week of the date of its despatch.

TELEGRAPHS AND TELEPHONES.

Telegraphs.

There are nineteen post-*cum*-telegraph offices situated at Tribeniganj, Udakishanganj, Sonbarsa Raj, Chhatapur, Seur Bazar, Kishanpur Thethita, Bangaon, Belwa Bazar, Birpur, Behariganj, Jinan, Raghopur, Narpatganj, Panchgachhia, Pratapganj, Saharsa, Supaul, Murliganj, Singheshwar Asthan and Karjain.

Telephone Exchange.

There are five Telephone Exchange offices situated at Saharsa, Supaul, Behariganj, Murliganj and Nirmali. Their connection with the other exchanges is given below:—

Name of the Exchange.	No. of connections.	Name of the Exchange to which connected.
1. Saharsa	52	Khagaria.
2 Supaul	40	Saharsa.
3 Murliganj	22	Banmankhi.
4. Behariganj	25	Banmankhi.
5. Nirmali	22	Darbhanga.

There is a public call office at Madhepura which is soon to be converted into an Auto-Exchange. Recently (i.e., in 1962) a Public Call Office at Bangaon has started functioning. There is also a P. B. X. at Birpur operated by the Kosi Project Department and maintained by the Posts and Telegraphs Department.

There is also a phone-*cum*-telegraph system in this district. The system has been introduced in the following Telegraph offices:—

Phone-*cum*-system for telegraph service.	The places to which connected.
1. Behariganj Telegraph Office	Udakishanganj.
2. Madhepur Telegraph Office	Kanap and Bangaon.
3. Simri Bakhtiarpur Telegraph Office	Sonbarsa Raj.
4. Supaul Telegraph Office	Therbita.
5. Panchgachhia Telegraph Office	Chandrain.

Murliganj Telephone Exchange is also soon to be converted into a small Auto-Exchange.

Previously there was only one outlet for Khagaria and beyond from Saharsa Telephone Exchange Office but now there are two outlets. Telephone was introduced in Saharsa about 1955, in Supaul on 4th March 1957, in Murliganj on 2nd March 1958 and in Behariganj on 29th March 1958.

RADIO.

The number of radios granted licence was 520 and 472 in 1962 and 1963 respectively. In 1962 there were 504 radios for domestic use and 16 radios for commercial purpose and in 1963, 443 radios were for domestic use and 29 for commercial purpose.

WIRELESS STATIONS.

In this district there are six wireless stations under the management of Police Department. At Saharsa there are two wireless stations one for the transmission of news within the district and the other for outside the district. Besides, wireless stations are located at Supaul, Madhepura, Kishanganj and Birpur. At Birpur there is also a wireless station under the management of the Kosi Project Department. These wireless stations except the last one are primarily meant for serving the purpose of police administration.

LANDING GROUNDS.

In this district there are two landing grounds—one at Birpur which is under the management of the Kosi Project Department and the other is at Saharsa which is maintained by the Public Works Department. The length of the landing ground at Saharsa is 2,800 ft. and its breadth is 500 feet.

CHAPTER VIII.

CHAPTER VIII.

THE KOSI.*

KOSI RIVER, ITS CATCHMENT AND TRIBUTARIES.

The Kosi known as Kaushiki in Sanskrit books is one of the most ancient rivers of India. It rises in the Himalayas and drains generally an area in the hills to the east of Kathmandu in Nepal, roughly between the longitudes 85°20′ and 88°. Its three tributaries within the Himalayas the Sun-Kosi, Arun and Tamur join together at Tribeni some six miles above Chatra, to form the Sapt Kosi, which flows thereafter through a gorge past Barahkshetra and debouches into the plain at Chatra. The Sun-Kosi takes its source near Kathmandu. The Arun rises into Tibet, where it is called Phingchue, cuts through a deep gorge across the great Himalayan Ranges and flows south to Tribeni. The Tamur comes from east to Tribeni. Two highest peaks in the world, Mt. Everest and Mt. Kanchanjunga are situated within the catchment of the Kosi. The chief tributaries that join the river in the plains are Tiljuga, Bhati Balan, Sugarwe, Soni or Jangar Balan, Kamla and Bagmati. All of them join the river on its right side. There are no major tributaries joining the river from the left.

The details of the catchment for the Sapt Kosi at Chatra are given in the following table:—

TABLE NO. I.

River.	Catchment (sq. miles).	Percentage to total.
The Sun	7,330	32
The Arun	13,330	58
The Tamur	2,228	10
The Sapt Kosi below the Triboni	112	23,000 square miles.

VAGARIES OF THE KOSI RIVER.

Though very little known outside, the Kosi has been one of the problem rivers of the world. It is notorious for its vagaries and has preferred to change its bed very often. During the last two centuries, for which records are available the river has been changing its course in a westerly direction and it has laterally moved nearly 70 miles. About 125 years back, the river was flowing just west of Forbesganj, Purnea and Katihar. It may be pointed out that the movement of the river has not been gradual one, as the river has been taking sudden jumps from one course to

* Contributed by Sri Debesh Mookerjea, Chief Engineer, Kosi Project (P. C. R. C.).

another from time to time. The river has been known to have shifted by as much as 12 miles to the west in the course of a single year. During each of these westward shifts, the river has generally moved along a straight course in the new direction until it met another stream-course, which it thereafter appropriated to itself and enlarged. The river has been swinging about a pivotal point situated near the Belka-hill nose. In 1937 the river was flowing just near Supaul and joined the Bagmati course above Dhamhara-ghat and thereafter flowed eastward up to Kursela where it joined the Ganga. Today the river is flowing along a more westerly course near Nirmali and Madhepur.

During these peregrinations, the river has laid waste vast tracts of what were once rich and fertile lands. For this reason and for the reason that during floods the river used to overflow its banks and inundate wide areas, it is often called "Bihar's River of Sorrow". During the floods, the river spilled over a large tract of land on the eastern side up to a north-south line passing through Pipra and Madhepura and submerged generally, most of the area over which it has shifted in the recent past. On the western side, the flood waters used to cover relatively a very narrow area, up to a maximum of about 5 miles to the west near Nirmali and Madhepura.

Heavy silt load.

The vagaries of the river are to be ascribed to the heavy coarse sediment load and bed load, the river brings down from the Himalayas. As regards total discharge and bed falls the Kosi is comparable to the neighbouring river Gandak. The hydrographs show that the flows in both the rivers are generally in step with each other, indicating thereby that the incidence of rainfall is generally similar in time, intensity and duration in both the catchments. But the Gandak is generally under better regime, the reason being that it carries much smaller quantities of coarse sediment and bed load as compared to the Kosi.

The comparatively excessive coarse sediment carried down by the Kosi is to be ascribed to the fact, that in its catchment the Himalayas is much more compressed. The valleys are narrower, the sides are steeper and there are no wider basins in the hill region for the river to spillover its flood waters and deposit its coarse sediment load. Moreover, on account of the steep and high sides, frequent slips occur in the river, and that adds considerably to the coarse sediment load of the river. Boulders, pebbles and shingles are also brought down into the river, which are thereafter rolled down into the plains.

Geologically, it is known that a wide area on either side of the Sapt Kosi between the Tribeni and Chatra is a "Thrust Zone", wherein, due to folding and faulting accompanying the mountain

building activity the older rock strata underneath have slided over and covered the much younger rich formations above. This overthrust is itself a direct consequence of the highly compressed nature of the Himalayas in this region. This reversal of the older rocks riding over the younger ones has brought to bear excessive stresses which has resulted in considerable shattering of the rocks over the area and on its margins. In addition, the frequent seismic disturbances, more especially the very intense earthquake of 1934, should have further accentuated the loosening up and disintegration of the already shattered rocks in the region. This shattered zone extends over the area through which the Sun-Kosi and the Tamur flow and constitutes a major contributary factor for the excessive sediment and bed loads carried down by the river. The chief reasons for excessive silt discharge may be attributed to—

(*i*) the concentration and uneven distribution of very high rainfall;

(*ii*) the exposed young rocks with high sediment loads subject to easy erosion;

(*iii*) the frequent seismic disturbances of great magnitude;

(*iv*) the steep slope of the river; and

(*v*) the afforestation and cultivation in unscientific way.

SEDIMENT DATA.

To get a quantitative estimate of the total amount of sediment brought down the river during each year and of the sediment intensities, gauging and sediment load determinations were started systematically from the year 1943 onwards. The silt quantity brought down by the river in each year from 1948 to 1961 are given in Table 2 below:—

TABLE NO. 2.

Year.	Run off in million acre ft.	Sediment load in 1,000 acre ft.				Percentage of sediment to run off.
		Coarse.	Medium.	Fine.	Total.	
1948	49.2	10.4	28.0	45.6	84.0	0.17
1949	47.1	9.5	37.6	76.1	123.2	0.28
1950	42.6	12.1	21.3	42.2	75.6	0.18
1951	36.3	16.2	24.2	43.0	83.3	0.23
1952	36.5	16.2	21.8	42.1	80.1	0.22
1953	35.8	13.4	18.7	34.0	66.1	0.18
1954	49.1	37.2	56.7	135.9	229.8	0.47
1955	34.3	13.4	13.9	23.9	50.2	0.16
1956	34.3	7.1	16.7	32.9	55.7	0.16
1957	34.3	6.5	15.7	26.2	48.4	0.14
1958	40.1	19.0	29.6	36.7	85.3	0.21
1959	36.8	11.9	22.3	36.7	70.9	0.19
1960	41.7	8.2	16.9	33.4	58.5	0.14
1961	39.3	8.2	13.1	26.6	47.9	0.12
Average 1948 to 1961	39.8	13.5	24.0	45.7	83.2	0.20

another from time to time. The river has been known to have shifted by as much as 12 miles to the west in the course of a single year. During each of these westward shifts, the river has generally moved along a straight course in the new direction until it met another stream-course, which it thereafter appropriated to itself and enlarged. The river has been swinging about a pivotal point situated near the Belka-hill nose. In 1937 the river was flowing just near Supaul and joined the Bagmati course above Dhamhara-ghat and thereafter flowed eastward up to Kursela where it joined the Ganga. Today the river is flowing along a more westerly course near Nirmali and Madhepur.

During these peregrinations, the river has laid waste vast tracts of what were once rich and fertile lands. For this reason and for the reason that during floods the river used to overflow its banks and inundate wide areas, it is often called "Bihar's River of Sorrow". During the floods, the river spilled over a large tract of land on the eastern side up to a north-south line passing through Pipra and Madhepura and submerged generally, most of the area over which it has shifted in the recent past. On the western side, the flood waters used to cover relatively a very narrow area, up to a maximum of about 5 miles to the west near Nirmali and Madhepura.

HEAVY SILT LOAD.

The vagaries of the river are to be ascribed to the heavy coarse sediment load and bed load, the river brings down from the Himalayas. As regards total discharge and bed falls the Kosi is comparable to the neighbouring river Gandak. The hydrographs show that the flows in both the rivers are generally in step with each other, indicating thereby that the incidence of rainfall is generally similar in time, intensity and duration in both the catchments. But the Gandak is generally under better regime, the reason being that it carries much smaller quantities of coarse sediment and bed load as compared to the Kosi.

The comparatively excessive coarse sediment carried down by the Kosi is to be ascribed to the fact, that in its catchment the Himalayas is much more compressed. The valleys are narrower, the sides are steeper and there are no wider basins in the hill region for the river to spillover its flood waters and deposit its coarse sediment load. Moreover, on account of the steep and high sides, frequent slips occur in the river, and that adds considerably to the coarse sediment load of the river. Boulders, pebbles and shingles are also brought down into the river, which are thereafter rolled down into the plains.

Geologically, it is known that a wide area on either side of the Sapt Kosi between the Tribeni and Chatra is a "Thrust Zone", wherein, due to folding and faulting accompanying the mountain

building activity the older rock strata underneath have slided over and covered the much younger rich formations above. This overthrust is itself a direct consequence of the highly compressed nature of the Himalayas in this region. This reversal of the older rocks riding over the younger ones has brought to bear excessive stresses which has resulted in considerable shattering of the rocks over the area and on its margins. In addition, the frequent seismic disturbances, more especially the very intense earthquake of 1934, should have further accentuated the loosening up and disintegration of the already shattered rocks in the region. This shattered zone extends over the area through which the Sun-Kosi and the Tamur flow and constitutes a major contributary factor for the excessive sediment and bed loads carried down by the river. The chief reasons for excessive silt discharge may be attributed to—

(*i*) the concentration and uneven distribution of very high rainfall;

(*ii*) the exposed young rocks with high sediment loads subject to easy erosion;

(*iii*) the frequent seismic disturbances of great magnitude;

(*iv*) the steep slope of the river; and

(*v*) the afforestation and cultivation in unscientific way.

SEDIMENT DATA.

To get a quantitative estimate of the total amount of sediment brought down the river during each year and of the sediment intensities, gauging and sediment load determinations were started systematically from the year 1943 onwards. The silt quantity brought down by the river in each year from 1948 to 1961 are given in Table 2 below:—

TABLE NO. 2.

Year.	Run off in million acre ft.	Sediment load in 1,000 acre ft.				Percentage of sediment to run off.
		Coarse.	Medium.	Fine.	Total.	
1948	49.2	10.4	28.0	45.6	84.0	0.17
1949	47.1	9.5	37.6	76.1	123.2	0.28
1950	42.6	12.1	21.3	42.2	75.6	0.18
1951	36.3	16.2	24.2	43.0	83.3	0.23
1952	36.5	16.2	21.8	42.1	80.1	0.22
1953 .. .	35.8	13.4	18.7	34.0	66.1	0.18
1954	49.1	37.2	56.7	135.9	229.8	0.47
1955	34.9	13.4	13.9	28.9	56.2	0.16
1956	34.3	7.1	15.7	32.9	55.7	0.16
1957	34.3	6.5	15.7	26.2	48.4	0.14
1958	40.1	19.0	29.6	36.7	85.3	0.21
1959	36.8	11.9	22.3	36.7	70.9	0.19
1960	41.7	8.2	16.9	33.4	58.5	0.14
1961	39.3	8.2	13.1	26.6	47.9	0.12
Average 1948 to 1961	39.8	13.5	24.0	45.7	83.2	0.20

The monthwise contributions of the silt load for each year has been tabulated in Table no. 3.

TABLE NO. 3.

Monthly total sediment load in Kosi at Barahkshetra for the years 1948–61.

Month.	1948.	1949.	1950.	1951.	1952.	1953.	1954.	1955.
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
January ..	0.11	0.12	0.12	0.07	0.06	0.06	0.04	0.11
February ..	0.05	0.11	0.08	0.05	0.07	0.05	0.06	0.08
March ..	0.16	.09	0.09	0.07	0.08	0.49	0.08	0.09
April ..	0.77	1.08	0.10	0.12	0.28	0.53	0.69	0.29
May ..	2.58	3.36	1.40	5.07	3.01	3.45	3.16	1.42
June ..	9.21	14.99	9.47	13.61	7.56	11.07	31.92	7.99
July ..	28.16	43.05	16.23	25.07	24.93	20.76	67.65	17.90
August ..	20.46	28.42	31.43	26.33	22.99	15.33	101.61	17.20
September ..	15.57	28.00	14.06	8.96	18.61	11.74	20.43	8.36
October ..	6.00	3.17	1.18	3.07	2.04	2.24	3.45	2.23
November ..	0.70	0.58	0.33	0.60	0.36	0.23	0.52	0.45
December ..	0.25	0.14	0.14	0.18	0.11	0.09	0.27	0.12
Total years ..	84.02	123.11	75.53	83.20	80.10	66.04	229.85	..
(*a*) ..	0.25	0.14	0.14	0.18	0.11	0.09	0.27	61.21
June to October (*b*).	79.40	117.63	73.27	77.00	76.13	61.14	225.03	53.68
Percentage of *b*/*a*	94.5	95.6	97.0	92.6	95.0	92.6	97.9	95.5

Month.	1956.	1957.	1958.	1959.	1960.	1961.	Average, 1948—61.
1	10	11	12	13	14	15	16
January ..	0.10	0.11	0.05	0.25	0.06	0.04	0.09
February ..	0.06	0.04	0.04	0.18	0.06	0.06	0.07
March	0.14	0.07	0.05	0.28	0.08	0.11	0.14
April	0.88	0.09	0.42	0.67	0.07	0.18	0.45
May	6.78	0.37	1.00	2.31	1.14	1.05	2.58
June	14.70	6.81	10.62	11.16	9.13	6.34	11.75
July	11.74	12.28	16.89	18.50	13.15	8.12	23.18
August ..	12.47	21.31	37.49	20.95	17.78	18.04	27.99
September ..	5.97	5.58	13.11	11.33	14.02	9.98	13.33
October ..	2.23	1.23	4.42	4.42	2.53	3.50	2.98
November ..	0.45	0.26	0.85	0.75	0.33	0.44	0.49
December ..	0.12	0.09	0.40	0.18	0.10	0.10	0.17
Total years ..	55.64	48.24	83.34	70.96	58.45	47.96	83.22
(*a*) ..	0.12	..	..	..	..	..	..
June to October (*b*)	47.11	47.21	82.53	67.34	56.61	45.98	79.23
Percentage of *b*/*a* ..	84.6	87.9	96.7	93.5	96.9	95.9	95.2

From the table it will appear that about 95 per cent of the silt load comes down to the river during the monsoon floods only, i.e., from the months of June to October. The sediment load as percentage of run off has also been indicated in Table no. 2. The maximum sediment load of 0.47 per cent of the annual run off was recorded in the year 1954 when there was maximum discharge and when 98 per cent of the total sediment was contributed during monsoon months only and 2 per cent during the next of the months. It is evident that greater the magnitude of the flood the greater is also the sediment load.

DISCHARGE.

The annual rainfall in the main catchment within the Himalayas varies from 60″ near the foot hills to as much as 160″ on the southern slopes of the central Himalayan ranges. Further north, the rainfall rapidly decreases. Even the lower Arun catchment is a region of comparatively low rainfall, only about 40″ per year. In the upper Arun catchment, the rainfall is still less, decreasing to about 10″ only to the north of the greater Himalayas. The average annual rainfall for the Kosi catchment has been estimated to be 67″ excluding the upper Arun catchment and only 45″ for the whole Kosi catchment.

The main monsoon season extends over the months of June, July, August, September and October. In all the tributaries and in the main river the discharges increase rapidly with deep and rapid fluctuations in flow. June is the month when the discharges generally increase rapidly. Late September and October are the months when the discharges begin to fall down rapidly to nearly off-monsoon flows. The fluctuations in the flow are very marked in all the rivers during this period. There are instances when the discharges have increased and then fallen by as much as a lakh of cusecs in a day in the Sun-Kosi or Arun, about 75,000 cusecs in a day in the Tamur and as much as two lakh cusecs in a day in the Sapt Kosi.

Peak flow for the year is generally recorded either in July or August, though there are instances when it was recorded as late as September. Peak flows result naturally after very heavy rainfall in the catchment, which occur generally during the tail end of the monsoon season. Excessively heavy rainfall intensity in the catchment is meteorologically associated with either of the following two major factors:—

(i) A bay depression breaking over the Nepal Himalayas during the later monsoon season; or

(ii) The incidence of westerly winds over the region associated with what is called a "break" in the monsoon, when the axis of monsoon trough shifts to the Himalayas.

The monthly run off of the Sapt Kosi from 1948–61 is given in Table no. 4. From the table it is seen that the total annual run off averages to 40 millions acre ft., of which 81 per cent is usually contributed from June to October and balance in the rest of the months. The run off is found generally low during the months from December to March. The contribution of run off from each of the major distributaries is as below:—

(*i*) The Sun Kosi—43.8%;

(*ii*) The Arun Kosi—36.6%; and

(*iii*) The Tamur—19.6%.

TABLE NO. 4.

Monthly run off in the Sapt Kosi from 1948 *to* 1961.

(In million acre ft.)

Month.	1948.	1949.	1950.	1951.	1952.	1953.	1954.	1955.
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
January ..	0.88	1.05	0.94	0.79	0.81	0.84	0.77	0.74
February ..	0.67	0.90	0.73	0.64	0.60	0.66	0.62	0.75
March ..	0.69	0.85	0.71	0.69	0.75	0.91	0.65	0.80
April ..	0.89	1.16	0.73	0.67	0.88	0.80	0.81	0.73
May ..	1.77	2.02	1.22	1.52	1.63	1.36	1.49	1.17
June ..	3.00	4.55	4.30	4.16	3.17	3.33	5.64	3.20
July ..	10.17	9.52	7.86	7.42	6.84	8.39	12.01	7.42
August ..	11.36	11.20	12.21	9.05	8.04	7.76	13.20	7.78
September ..	9.87	8.52	8.40	5.85	7.62	7.16	7.91	5.48
October ..	5.40	4.17	2.91	2.80	3.21	3.00	3.31	3.42
November ..	2.11	1.95	1.52	1.62	1.69	1.50	1.57	1.06
December ..	1.44	1.22	1.01	1.08	1.16	1.05	1.10	1.19
Total for the year (*a*).	49.21	47.11	42.54	36.29	36.49	35.76	49.08	34.38
Total June to October (*b*).	40.79	37.96	35.66	29.28	28.88	28.64	42.07	27.30
Percentage of *b*/*a*.	82.8	80.6	83.8	80.7	79.1	80.1	85.7	79.5

Month.	1956.	1957.	1958.	1959.	1960.	1961.	Average for 1948—61.
1	10	11	12	13	14	15	16
January ..	0.92	1.06	0.82	0.87	0.88	0.95	0.88
February ..	0.71	0.76	0.63	0.69	0.75	0.78	0.71
March ..	0.76	0.81	0.69	0.82	0.78	0.89	0.77
April ..	0.85	0.84	0.86	0.94	0.75	1.03	0.85
May ..	2.24	1.19	1.43	1.40	1.40	1.52	1.53
June ..	4.67	2.62	3.11	3.51	4.31	4.47	3.92
July ..	5.80	6.92	6.93	6.45	7.03	6.18	7.85
August ..	6.86	9.47	11.58	7.70	9.31	9.54	9.65
September ..	5.26	5.23	7.08	6.54	7.87	6.60	7.03
October ..	3.25	2.79	3.99	4.68	4.42	4.19	3.60
November ..	1.76	1.45	1.74	2.03	1.93	1.96	1.75
December ..	1.24	1.05	1.20	1.15	1.34	1.22	1.17
Total for the year (*a*).	34.32	34.24	40.05	36.78	41.67	39.32	39.80
Total June to October (*b*).	25.84	27.08	32.69	28.88	33.84	30.97	32.14
Percentage of *b*/*a*.	75.3	79.1	81.6	78.5	81.2	78.8	80.8

The maximum and minimum discharge of the Sapt Kosi from 1948–61 with date of occurrence is given below in Table no. 5.

TABLE NO. 5.

Year.	Maximum.		Minimum.	
	Discharge.	Date	Discharge.	Date.
1948	4,78,422	July 13 ..	9,016	March 18.
1949	3,95,640	July 19 ..	12,415	March 26.
1950 . ..	3,40,661	August 20 ..	9,603	March 30.
1951 . ..	2,56,284	August 24 ..	9,325	March 24.
1952	3,06,443	September 24	10,843	February 27.
1953	1,91,413	July 30 ..	10,988	February 27.
1954	8,55,237	August 24 ..	9,481	March 19.
1955	2,50,000	August 7 ..	10,114	February 3.
1956	1,92,000	August 29	10,794	March 20.
1957	2,66,000	August 12 ..	11,261	March 2.
1958	3,73,000	August 25 ..	10,348	March 17.
1959	2,11,000	August 10 .	11,339	February 19.
1960	2,54,000	September 28	11,102	April 19.
1961	2,93,000	August 20 ..	12,519	February 21.

The maximum discharge so far observed is 8.55 lacs cusecs in the year 1954 which is considered as a crucial year in the districts of Darbhanga, Saharsa and Purnea.

The main problems of the Kosi.

The river causes annually a large destruction by—

(*i*) flooding a wide stretch of land;

(*ii*) depositing coarse silt on fertile lands; and

(*iii*) shifting its course forming numerous *dhars* and destroying buildings and gardens in its way.

The annual loss in terms of money was estimated at ten crores of rupees. The amount of human suffering and the instability of life caused was immense.

The basic factors causing the lateral movement of the river and other troubles are well recognised. These are—

(*i*) excessive bed load and coarse silt discharge;

(*ii*) excessive river or valley slopes even below gorge;

(*iii*) absence of strong high banks; erodable low banks are ineffective for confining flood waters or maintaining a definite channel;

(*iv*) large discharge; and

(*v*) lateral slope of terrain assists the movement of the river by inducing pendulam action starting at bends.

Attempts were made in the distant past to prevent the movement of the river by building an embankment on western side. These might have been effective in distant past but in the recent past they were not at all effective. The various attempts made to control the river are discussed in subsequent paragraphs.

History of different proposals.

The first attempt to tackle the problem was made in a conference in 1896-97, in Calcutta, when the question of building extensive embankments to control the river and prevent its swinging to the west was considered. The conference was presided over by the Secretary to the Government of India in the Public Works Department. However, the proposal was considered to be of doubtful efficacy and it was concluded that no steps were feasible for controlling the course of this big river with its numerous channels and wide and elevated beds, beyond protecting by short lengths of embankments isolated tracks exposed to its floods.

1937 *Patna Flood Conference.*—In 1937, a conference of officials and non-officials was called by the then provincial Ministry of Bihar, to discuss the problem of floods in North Bihar. At this conference the controversy centered mainly round "embankments or no embankments".

The Chief Engineer, Bihar, was for an all out policy of removing all embankments public and private, on the plea that the embankments did more harm than good, that they merely transferred trouble from one area to another and that they gave rise to a false sense of security.

Dr. Rajendra Pd., in dealing with the flood problem of Bihar, asked among others, the following questions:—

"Is it possible to control the North Bihar rivers as to make them efficient for draining away the surplus water without causing devastation?

"Is it possible to create artificial reservoirs where the surplus water may be stored and let off for irrigational purposes when required? What would be the cost of such a scheme?"

A member referring to the Kosi Flood problems said that the only possible means to check the Kosi river was to dam it where it left the hills and regulate the flow past the river, but there were two obstacles. The dam site lay in Nepal territory and the cost would be enormous. Nevertheless, he considered the project worthwhile as he visualised the installation of hydro-electric plant, the opening of the river to navigation and the development of irrigation.

The deliberations of this conference, however, do not appear to have led to any constructive approach towards the solution of the flood problems of North Bihar.

Claude Inglis's report.—In 1941, Mr. C. C. Inglis, Director, Central Irrigation and Hydrodynamic Research Station, made a comprehensive inspection of the Kosi river both in Nepal and Bihar and submitted a report on the "factors affecting the westerly movement of the Kosi river with suggestions for further investigation". His conclusions were—

"(i) The river is now held firm along the right bank and will continue to fill up the trough of low land which is now occupied by Tiljuga and Balan rivers, until its westward translation is stopped by the somewhat higher land running south from Tamuria, along which an embankment probably be required to prevent still further westward movement.

"(ii) The cause of the movement is the building up of the sub-montane delta due to an excess charge of sand. This sand is stated to be due to a considerable extent to landslides and erosion which occurs as a result of removal of forest trees and undergrowth from the steep hill sides in order to secure short term cultivation."

He wanted some more data to be collected for the lower reaches of the river but no action was taken by the Government on his report.

The Bihar Post-war Development Plan.—Owing to shortage of personnel and equipment during the war years no further action seems to have been taken in dealing with the problem of the Kosi beyond including in the Bihar post-war plan a proposal for the construction of marginal embankments, right from the Nepal foot hills to the Ganga to control the river by confining to a definite channel. The scheme was estimated to cost roughly Rs. 10 crores.

Report of the Central Waterways Irrigation and Navigation Commission (1946).—The above proposal of marginal embankments was considered by the Labour Department of the Government of India; the Secretary referred it to the Chairman of the then Central Waterways Irrigation and Navigation Commission (Now Central Water and Power Commission), who opined that a more effective control would be secured by the construction of storage reservoir in the hills which would give effective control of floods in the river and in addition provide water for use in irrigation, navigation, power generation, etc. As a result of correspondence with the Government of Bihar, a further note was recorded in August, 1946 to the effect that no satisfactory scheme for the control of the Kosi and its flood damage can be prepared except after a comprehensive survey of the entire field of possibilities, viz., the construction of a high dam across the Chatra gorge, training the Kosi in the lower reaches and exclusion of floods from the low lying areas which are susceptible to water logging.

The Kosi river was inspected up to its junction with the Tamur tributary by officers of the Commission and Geological Survey of India, and of the Governments of Bihar and Nepal. The party led by the Chairman, C. W. I. N. C. (now C. W. P. C.)*, carried out the reconnaissance between the 24th and 31st January, 1946 under difficult conditions. There was great paucity and in most cases complete absence of basic data in respect of rainfall, flood discharge, minimum and normal flows, silt load, surface contours, subsoil water levels and the correct magnitude of the damage caused by the vagaries of the river. The Chairman gathered such information as possible as a result of inspection, discussions and investigation and prepared the preliminary report on the project in March, 1946.

* C. W. P. C.—Central Water and Power Commission.

As the dam site and several other works lay in Nepal, the Chairman visited Kathmandu accompanied by the Superintendent Meteorologist. Together with H. M.'s* Charge-d'affaires in Nepal, they had discussions with that Government between the 24th May and 3rd June, 1946. The Government of Nepal kindly accepted the recommendations concerning Nepal and authorised the C. W. P. C.† and other organisations working under its direction or control to carry out the full programme of surveys and investigations required for the Kosi Dam Project in the Nepal territory. This was followed by discussions between the Government of India and the Government of Bihar and investigations were taken in hand thereafter.

The Original Multi-purpose Scheme.

Thus though the problem of Kosi had been engaging the attention of the authorities since a long time, the work of surveys and investigations for the purpose of preparing a project for the control of this dangerous river, which has been rightly called the "Sorrow of Bihar", was only started in 1946. As a result of these surveys, a Multi-purpose Scheme costing Rs. 177 crores was evolved which comprised the construction of—

(*a*) a dam, at Barahkshetra, of an unprecedented height of 873 feet above foundation rock to impound 6.9 million acre feet in the reservoir of which 3.1 million acre feet was dead storage to provide silt reserve and minimum head for power generation, the remaining 3.8 million acre feet providing flood absorption, capacity to regulate floods so as not to let them exceed a safe maximum of 2 lakh cusecs to generate hydro-electric power to the extent of 1.8 million Kilo Watts, and to provide navigation facilities in the reservoir and the river below; and

(*b*) a barrage at Chatra and canals for irrigating annually 38.4 lakh acres of land in Nepal and Bihar flushing drainage channels and siltation of low lying areas and for generating 90,000 K.W. hydro-electric power on the eastern canal.

In view of the huge cost of the project and the limited financial and material resources available in the country the scheme was divided into seven easy stages, each self-supporting and independent in itself and yet capable of being super-imposed on the preceding one without involving any engineering difficulty or wasteful expenditure.

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* H. M.'s—His Majesty's.

† C. W. P. C.—Central Water and Power Commission.

ADVISORY COMMITTEE REPORT (1951).

When the Report on Stage I of the above Multi-purpose Scheme was submitted to the Government of India for sanction, they, vide Resolution no. DW21, dated the 5th June, 1951, appointed an Advisory Committee consisting of five Engineers to go into the details of the project and to advise them on the general soundness of the Scheme, on its adaptability to staging and as to the economies of the project as a whole. The Committee submitted their report in September, 1951, suggesting certain modifications and recommended the construction of Belka dam.

The Belka reservoir would impound 1.75 million acre feet of water of which 0.78 million acre feet will be dead storage, to provide silt reserve and minimum head for power generation, the remaining 0.97 million acre feet providing flood absorption capacity for regulation and moderation of flood. Hydro-electric power could be generated to the extent of 90,000 K.W. at the falls in the canals. The spillway portion was recommended to be of concrete and the rest of the dam in earth. The western end was to be enclosed into the Belka hills and the eastern dam on the eastern flank was recommended to be tied into the high ground at the foot hills. The maximum hydraulic height of the dam was 85 feet.

The Committee recommended further the construction of the Eastern Kosi Canal taking off from the tail race of the power house at the dam. This canal will have a discharge of 19,821 cusecs at the head and will irrigate annually 14.36 lakh acres of land in Purnea and Saharsa districts of North Bihar

The construction of the Eastern Nepal Branch taking off, like the Eastern Kosi Canal, from the tail race of the Power House at the dam for irrigating areas in the Morang district of Nepal. This canal will have a discharge of 1,369 cusecs and will irrigate annually 1.82 lakh acres of land.

The construction of the Western Flood Protective Embankment running parallel and some distance away on the west of the present main channel of the Kosi and extending from right bank of the Ghati Balan to Bhit Bhagwanpur, opposite Supaul, a length of some 23 miles. This embankment was intended to prevent further westward movement of the Kosi.

C. W. AND P. C.* PROPOSALS (1953).

Based on investigations at Belka site, estimates were prepared for the Belka dam. The estimates were far in excess of the figures assumed by the Belka Advisory Committee. The Central Water and Power Commission, therefore made alternative studies which was a low detention dam at Belka with F. R. L. 350. The proposal requiring the low detention dam at Belka was discussed with some

* C. W. & P. C.—Central Water and Power Commission.

of the members of the Advisory Committee (1951) and the Planning Commission in 1953. Estimates were asked to be prepared. Meanwhile the Chairman, Central Water and Power Commission, inspected the Kosi area and as a result of this inspection and comprehensive study of the data collected, formulated the present scheme described below.

THE PRESENT SCHEME.

The scheme consists of the following three units:—

Unit I.—Construction of 3,770 feet long R. C. C. Barrage across the river 3 miles above Hanumannagar in Nepal with Eastern and Western Earth Dams of 6,200 feet and 12,500 feet lengths respectively tagged with Eastern and Western Afflux *Bunds* each nearly 8 miles long;

Unit II.—Construction of flood protection banks on either side below the Barrage—75½ miles in length on western side from Bharda to Bhanthi including ring *bunds* around Nirmali and Mahadeo Math, Tiljuga Marginal and Balan Marginal Embankments and 62 miles on the eastern side and also a flood bank of 12 miles length above the Eastern Afflux *Bund;* and

Unit III.—Eastern Canal System for irrigating about 14 lakh acres of land annually.

Estimate.

Originally, in 1953, the Central Water and Power Commission had estimated that the Scheme might cost Rs. 37.32 crores although, the Project Engineers felt that the cost might be much more. On detailed examination by the Central Water and Power Commission, an estimate for Rs. 45.92 crores was administratively approved in December, 1957. Later on, this was revised to Rs. 44.76 crores and the administrative approval accorded in June, 1960. Since the sanction of the Project estimate, there have been lot of further changes. Some inadequate provisions in the estimate came to light in course of execution, the cost of labour and materials increased as also the scope of the various components of the work. The revised estimated cost (proposed) of the project now stands at Rs. 52.82 crores as per details given below:—

Unit I—Rs. 22.95 crores.

Unit II—Rs. 9.40 crores.

Unit III—Rs. 20.47 crores.

Total—Rs. 52.82 crores.

This estimate is under examination by the Government of India and will be sanctioned as soon as their clearance is received.

NEW SCHEMES.

The original scheme did not provide for the irrigation on the western side and also the land in the district of Saharsa between the Bhenga *dhar* and Eastern Kosi Embankment. There was persistent demand from the public of these areas to give them also the benefit of irrigation. The following new schemes were later on sanctioned; works in these schemes have also been taken up:—

(1) Western Canal System—Rs. 13.4939 crores.

(2) Rajpur Canal System—Rs. 4.6680 crores.

(3) Extension of the Eastern and Western Embankments—Rs. 0.80 crore.

INDO-NEPAL AGREEMENT.

A substantial portion of the project work falls in the Nepal territory. So that the next necessary step, after the preparation of the scheme in 1953, was to obtain the consent of the Nepal Government for carrying out work in their territory. A delegation, headed by Shri Gulzarilal Nanda, the then Union Minister for Planning, Irrigation and Power, visited Kathmandu and Indo-Nepal Agreement on the Kosi was signed between the Government of Nepal and the Union Government on the 25th April, 1954. The agreement provided for acquisition of land, construction of work camps, laying lines of communication in Nepal subject to the full recognition of the sovereignty rights of the Nepal Government. It also provided for further investigations, soil conservation, distribution of electricity when generated and other matter as may be of mutual benefit to both the countries. In pursuance of the Agreement a Co-ordination Committee of six persons consisting of three nominees of the Union Government, three of the Nepal Government with the Minister of the Nepal Government as the Chairman, was set up in order to deal expeditiously with matters arising out of the agreement. The Chief Administrator of the Kosi Project was made the Secretary to the Committee.

FUNCTION OF THE BARRAGE.

The Barrage has been planned to discharge the following functions:—

(1) To flatten the excessive river gradient upstream of Barrage and ensure effective reduction in coarse silt charge downstream. As the river emerges from the gorge at Chatra, its slope is very steep enabling to carry its full coarse charge, into plains below. The high velocities further cause bank erosion thus

enhancing its silt load. The river carries this high charge until Hanumannagar, below which the natural country slope is too flat to maintain the velocities necessary for charge transportation. This results in deposition of coarse charge which is depicted by splitting of Kosi into large number of interlacing channels below Hanumannagar.

If coarse silt can be reduced above this reach, the trouble causing river instability will be overcome and flood control will become a relatively much simple problem.

The Kosi Barrage has been constructed to discharge this function. The Barrage raises, the normal flood level by about 12 feet (from R. L.* 243 to R. L.* 255). This causes the steep gradient between Belka and Hanumannagar, to reduce from an average of 3.5 feet per mile to less than 3 feet per mile from the known principles of sediment transportation. This means reduction of silt carrying capacity as under:—

(*i*) Quantity of silt carried is reduced to 63 per cent.

(*ii*) Capacity to erode is reduced to 58 per cent.

(*iii*) Maximum-size of the particles that can be carried is reduced to 58 per cent.

(2) To tie down the river immediately upstream of reach where the Kosi splits into large numbers of interlacing channels.

A central structure was found necessary above the unstable reach (Hanumannagar to Jhamta) to ensure flow at the same place.

(3) To feed supplies to irrigation channels, the Kosi Barrage will divert necessary irrigation supplies to the east and west sides.

(4) Another incidental advantage of the Barrage would be the generation of hydro-power.

PRELIMINARIES FOR THE CONSTRUCTION OF THE BARRAGE AND APPURTENANT WORK.

Before the actual construction of the Barrage, lot of preliminary works had to be done for access to the site of the Barrage, viz., carriage of materials for the construction of the Barrage from the rail head at Bathnaha Station (N. F. Rly.) to the site of work, setting of camps for the housing of the staff at various places, etc. A 27-mile long *pucca* road with several bridges big and small between

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* R. L.—River Level.

Bathnaha and Bhimnagar was constructed. Seventy-six miles of narrow gauge railway line was laid to link Bathnaha, Bhimnagar, Chakarghati, Chatra and Dharan. A township for the staff was constructed at Birpur. Along with offices it contains a well equipped hospital, a High school, a Sub-Treasury, a Post Office and a Telephone Exchange buildings. The colony has the facilities of water-supply, electrification and drainage, etc. A colony for the skilled workmen has been constructed near Bhimnagar. Camps at Dharan, Chatra, Chakarghati Haripur and Bharda in Nepal were also constructed.

Construction Materials and the bottlenecks in feeding the same to the works.

One of the great problems which the Project Engineers had to face was feeding the works with the requisite type and quantity of materials. This can be well understood if we visualise the location of the Kosi Barrage which is situated in Nepal territory at a distance of about 30 miles from Bathnaha, the nearest Rail Head on N. F. Railway.

Out of the several construction materials like cement, steel and stone, etc., the first two namely, cement and steel had to be transported from far off places, lying on the other side of the river Ganga. Due to transhipment from broad to meter gauge at Barauni, Pahleza and other points and other usual difficulties, it always remained a problem as to how to ensure timely and programmed delivery of these vitally important materials.

The sand for the construction of Barrage was transported from Gangajali located in Nepal at a distance of 17 miles from the western bank of the river. For speedy transport tram-track was laid from Bharda Ghat to Gangajali and boats were used for crossing the river and then on the left bank also, it was carried by tipping wagons working with the help of locos from the river bank to the work site. This cumbersome process of transport necessitated frequent loading and unloading during transport from quarry area at Gangajali to work site. But there was no other alternative left. In all about 34 lac cft. of Gangajali sand was transported for use in concrete of the main Barrage.

The total requirement of stone materials for the Barrage works out to roughly 5 crore cft. The entire requirement for construction had to be met by quarrying stones in Chatra and Dharan areas in the Morang district of Nepal. The quarrying operation for coarse aggregate involved screening the materials by electrically operated screens to which the raw materials were fed by pushing with the help of dozers and then the screened aggregate was transported by aerial rope-way to a place called Ghopa where they were loaded direct from the bunkers into either railway wagons or tippers which transported it to the Barrage construction site.

The quarrying operation at Chatra was very simple. Machines were not used. The boulders of requisite sizes and specifications were manually picked up from the bed of the main river or other small Kholas in the neighbouring jungle areas. The work of collection and the transport to the railway loading yard was done through the contractors. But the loading into railway wagons was partly done through the contractors and partly departmental.

The immediate need for execution of the Project on the one hand, coupled with natural difficulties in procurement of construction of materials on the other, posed a baffling problem. But due to advance planning and accurate assessments, not a single occasion arose when progress could be marred due to inadequate supply of materials.

SALIENT FEATURES.

The work involved a 3,770 feet long R. C. C. Barrage of the floating raft type with 56 clear spans of 60 feet each. On either side of the concrete Barrage there are earthen dams, connecting the flood levees, thus covering the entire width of the river. The length of the Western Earth Dam is 12,500 feet and that of the Eastern Earth Dam 6,500 feet. On the upstream of the Barrage there are Afflux Bunds of the lengths of 8 miles on each bank in continuation of the flood levees. The Eastern Afflux Bund is further continued for another 12 miles as flood embankment. The following are the salient features of the Barrage and appurtenant works—

A—Barrage—

(*i*) Designed discharge—9.50 lakh cusecs.

(*ii*) Length of the Barrage—3,770 feet.

(*iii*) Looseness factor of the Barrage—1.45.

(*iv*) Silt factor—1.3.

(*v*) No. of bays—6.

(*vi*) Left undersluices—6.
Spillway—46.
Right undersluices—4.

(*vii*) Intensity of discharge—
Undersluices—397 cusecs.
Spillways—358 inches.

(*viii*) Length of stilling basin with friction blocks—89 feet 6 inches.

(*ix*) Lacy's scour depths—
Spillways—38.6 feet.
Undersluices—41.2 feet

(x) Bottom levels of sheet piles—

Undersluices—

(a) Upstream—201.00
(b) Downstream—187.50

Spillway—

(a) Upstream—201.00
(b) Downstream—191.00

(xi) Present pond level—245

(xii) Future pond level—255

(xiii) Crest level—

(a) Undersluices—230
(b) Spillways—235

(xiv) Top level of cistern—

(a) Undersluices—218
(b) Spillways—222

(xv) Size of gates—

(a) Undersluices—60 feet×26 feet
(b) Spillways—60 feet×21 feet

(xvi) Width of piers—

(a) Main piers—7 feet
(b) Double piers—10 feet
(c) Dummy piers—5 feet

(xvii) Quantity of important items of works involved—

(a) Concreting—85 lakh cft.
(b) Earthwork in excavation—470 lakh cft.
(c) Sheet piling—4,400 tons.
(d) Rip Rap work—30.84 lakh cft.

B—Guide Bunds—	Left guide bund.	Right guide bund.
(i) Lengths—		
(a) Straight portion ..	3,000 feet	3,000 feet.
(b) Curved portion ..	1,832 feet	3,446 feet.
(ii) Radius of curvature of nose—		
(a) Upstream	500 feet	1,700 feet.
(b) Downstream	500 feet	500 feet.
(iii) Top widths	21 feet	21 feet.
(iv) Side slopes—		
(a) River side	2:1	2:1
(b) Country side	3:1	2:1
(v) Quantities of work involved—		
(a) Earthwork	65,78,000 cft.	1,09,18,000 cft.
(b) Concreting	10,10,000 cft.	16,22,500 cft.
(c) Stone work	19 lakh cft.	35 lakh cft.

Earth Dams—	Eastern.	Western.
Lengths	6,200 feet	12,500 feet.
Earthwork of all types ..	173 lakh cft.	420 lakh cft.

CONSTRUCTION OF THE BARRAGE AND APPURTENANT WORK.

To begin with, the construction of Eastern Afflux Bund and Eastern Earth Dam were taken first. The Project Engineers had to face lot of difficulties as no contractors and skilled labourers were available in the area at that time. The initial difficulties were, however, overcome by constant vigilance of the department.

In 1958, active construction of Barrage work started. The foundation stone was laid by His Majesty, the King of Nepal in presence of our late Prime Minister on the 30th April, 1959. The Barrage has been constructed on an island. The construction of left and right guide *bunds* were taken up first which served as coffer dams also for the main Barrage. In the upstream and downstream of the Barrage site, *bunds* spanning between the left and right guide *bunds* were also constructed. These two *bunds* and guide *bunds* thus boxed the Barrage site area and gave protection to the machines and materials against any sudden flood in the river. This also facilitated the communication system for transport of men and materials up to the Barrage construction site. The channels on the east of the Barrage were also blocked.

Contract for the concreting portion of the Kosi Barrage was awarded to M|s. National Projects Construction Corporation, a Government of India undertaking. The stone materials and sand were supplied by the department in the bins specially constructed for the purpose. Several one-cubic yard electrically operated mixers were installed near the bins. The coarse aggregate, sand and cement were fed to these mixers manually as per design. The finished concrete used to be poured in tipping wagons which used to be pushed by labourers and dumped near the actual place of concreting. In addition there were 10 to 12 mixers of smaller capacity also and were installed at places of convenience.

The excavation of the Barrage foundation was done by machines like dozer-scrappers and dragline dumper combination. The sinking of the wells was done manually as well by clam shells. Due to great depth and diameter of wells, machine sinking was found to be cheaper. In the Barrage, a lot of sheet-piling job had to be done. The depth of the piles varied from 12 feet to 30 feet. This was done by pile-driving plants run by compressed air or steam.

The biggest problem presented during the Barrage construction work was the dewatering of the Barrage foundation. The average level of the ground water at the site of the Barrage was 237.00 cusecs. The water level during construction had to be lowered down to R. L. 215 in the spillway section and even 5 feet deeper in the undersluices.

Dewatering of the Kosi Barrage foundation was done merely by open pumping through 12 feet diameter brick masonry sump-wells consisting of 20 inches thick steening set in cement mortar

1 : 6 with nominal reinforcement. These sumpwells were approximately taken down to five feet below the deepest bed of the Barrage foundation and bottom of the wells were properly plugged with cement concrete 1 : 3 : 6. The average distance between two sumps was varying to suit the local conditions; but on the average these sumps were 200 feet apart. These sumps were connected with the Barrage pit by open drains. The pumps installed were mostly electrically driven ones as these were comparatively trouble free, though engine-driven pumps were also used for stray and local dewatering. During the peak period of construction when there was a maximum installation of pumps of about 120, the power used in dewatering was of the order of 2,200 K. W. Flow more, Power mac, Hor-land, Worthington Simpson end flow and Hydraulically balanced 5 L and 5½ series Worthington Simpson pumps of size 6"×6", 8"×8" and 4" *plus* 4", etc., were mostly used for dewatering. The maximum rate of dewatering in different working seasons is given below:—

TABLE NO. 6.

Serial no.	Working season.	Peripherial area of excavated pit in lac sft.	Effective wetted area.	Total no. of pumps working.	Maximum discharge in cusecs.	Discharge per lakh sft. of peripherial area.
1	2	3	4	5	6	7
1	1958-59 ..	0.60	0.60	66	90.00	150.00
2	1959-60 ..	0.95	0.95	91	133.00	140.00
3	1960-61 ..	1.30	1.30	110	162.62	125.00
4	1961-62 ..	2.40	1.90	118	199.95	105.00

The construction of the Barrage was covered in four working seasons.

RIVER DIVERSION.

After the construction of the Barrage the river had to be diverted from its age old course to follow certain predetermined channels, through the Barrage. The diversion of the Kosi river was linked up with the erection of gates and some other ancillary works specially wanted by H. M. G.* of Nepal. There was considerable handicap and delay in the transport of gate parts from Calcutta which involved transhipment from broad gauge to meter gauge, crossing the Ganga at Farakka or Bhagalpur or Mokameh and then transhipment from meter gauge to narrow gauge Project Railway or by road from the nearest rail head to the site of work a distance of nearly 28 miles.

* H. M. G.—His Majesty's Government.

There was certain controversy on whether the diversion of the river should be done in one or two seasons. At the instance of the Chief Engineer it was decided to complete the diversion in one season and final decision to take up the work came as late as 15th February, 1963. The Central Water and Power Research Station, Poona, was requested to conduct certain field model experiments to test certain proposals made by the Project Engineers. Their comments were also received.

The scheme of the diversion in short comprised the excavation of four pilot cuts leading from the upstream channel, through the Barrage and out falling into the downstream channel and construction of a coffer dam across the river at the off-take point of the pilot cuts to facilitate diversion of the river and construction of the Western Earth Dam. The depth of water in the river at the start of the construction varied from a foot to eight feet. As the coffer dam was built up, the depth of flow and velocity correspondingly increased. When the gap was reduced from 15,000 feet to nearly 1,500 feet, ordinary sand embankment could not stand. A non-erodible bed was, therefore, made by dumping stones. By this, the gap could be reduced to 700 feet. At that stage, the velocity and the depth of the scour started developing considerably. A small stone dam had to be built forming some sort of a rock toe and sand was being dumped in front by dumpers and dozers. In closing one of the deep channels, dumping of stone also could not bear fruit. Stones in mild steel crates of size 20 feet × 5 feet × 3 feet had to be put in. The gap was thus reduced to 180 feet. The depth of scour then went to 30 feet and the crates full of stones could not be placed in position even by cranes At that stage two or three crates piled together were pushed by H. D. 21 dozer. Ultimately, when the gap was reduced to 20 feet or so, piles of crates heaped and tied together on both banks were pushed into the gap.

The final closure took place at 11 P.M., on the 31st March 1963, after continuous fight with the river for nearly 1½ months. The entire operation was extremely risky and dangerous, as operation and control of cranes, dumpers, dozers and other machines on a small crest of Coffer Dam presented serious problems which required minute observation, perfect control and well thoughtout synchronisation. The diversion of a river like the Kosi carrying a minimum discharge of over 12,000 cusecs and spreading over a fine sand bed for nearly ¾ mile, is the first of its kind in India and perhaps in the world. Diversion of rivers during construction of dams is, of course, a common feature but the significant difference is that in such cases the river carrying a smaller discharge is confined within definite high banks and rocky bed. In the present case the work had to be carried out in a shifting and turbulent river with fine sand and wide bed, in very unfavourable climatic conditions with heavy sand storms.

THE EMBANKMENTS.

Unit two of the Project consisted of the construction of about 150 miles of embankment on both sides of the river. Inauguration ceremony of this work was done on the 14th January, 1955, by late Dr. S. K. Sinha, Chief Minister, Bihar, who cut the first sod of earth near Nirmali for the embankment, amidst tumultuous applause and great enthusiasm of the local people.

The work was started with great handicap on account of extreme shortage of technical personnel and unfavourable conditions prevailing in the working area on account of jungles, unhealthy climate, want of suitable communications and marketing facilities but all these odds were boldly faced and the work was pushed through vigorously. A remarkable feature of the work has been an extensive enlistment of public co-operation and local participation through the Bharat Sewak Samaj. This aspect has been separately discussed under the head "Public Co-operation".

Several active Kosi *dhars* falling in the alignment of the embankments presented special difficulties. These *dhars* take off from the main river and wind their way downward in the shape of numerous interlacing channels meeting the main channel once again in the lower reaches. All the *dhars* were successfully tackled.

The top width of the embankments has been kept 15 feet with side slopes of 1:2 to 1:3, depending upon the nature of the soil. A free board of 6 feet over the designed flood level with a discharge of 9.5 lakh cusecs has been allowed in fixing the crest level of the embankment. The entire earthwork was done by manual labour and compaction was ensured by watering and ramming the soil in 9 inches layers by wooden rammers. The side slopes of the embankments have been turfed with *dub* grass in the entire length.

The embankments on both sides have been completed and have given protection to 6½ lakh acres of land in North Bihar and Nepal. Further extension of Eastern and Western Embankments by 16 miles and 2½ miles respectively to give protection from flood to an additional area of 37,600 acres has also been taken up and has already made sufficient progress.

The crucial danger in this river is that the break in levees would be not so much due to pressure of water or sudden draw down effect but due to rapid erosion of the banks of the river in the floods, then leading the levees to initial collapse soon after the bank erosion extends to the body of the levees. To prevent such bank erosion and formation of parallel channels, spurs, both permeable and impermeable have been constructed at vulnerable points. Annual cross sections of the river channels are being taken from Chatra downwards since 1955, to study the changes in the river.

The control of a river by embankments requires adequate supervision to provide careful and efficient maintenance and keen

watch specially during floods when a slight negligence or delay in this direction can precipitate catastrophical results. A systematic and efficient patrolling of the flood banks is, therefore, regularly arranged during the flood season for very prompt attention to weak spots when detected. The discharge of the river Kosi recorded at Barahkshetra is regularly transmitted by wireless and telegrams to concerned offices. This serves as a forewarning and enables to anticipate the conditions of the river. *Khalasis* are placed all along the embankment for day and night vigil by patrolling in small stretches. Surprise check by Overseers, Subdivisional Officers and Executive Engineers is continuously done. It is because of the vigilance exercised by the Kosi Project authority that no serious damage has so far occurred on the embankments.

PUBLIC CO-OPERATION IN THE KOSI.

One of the important features of works in the Kosi Project is the materialisation of people's participation in the execution of the Project. The underlying idea behind mass participation in the Kosi was not just to induce an alternative agency for execution of the Project works but also to enthuse in the people a spirit of co-operation and partnership in the developmental activities of the State. This bold experiment was launched in pursuance of one of the basic principles of the First Five-Year Plan, to mobilise active popular support for large projects.

The decision to get a portion of the Kosi Project work done through public co-operation was taken by the Kosi Control Board on the 2nd December, 1954. The organisation of public co-operation was to be entrusted to establish institutions of non-political character. Accordingly, the Bharat Sewak Samaj came forward and took the responsibility of giving a shape to the scheme.

The work of the construction of Western Kosi Flood Embankment was inaugurated by Dr. S. K. Sinha, the late Chief Minister of Bihar, on the 14th January, 1955. He laid the first basket of earth at village Bhutaha near Nirmali in the district of Saharsa. Work on the Eastern Embankment was inaugurated after a few days near Supal on 3rd February, 1955. This was followed by allotment of further works to the Bharat Sewak Samaj in the construction of Western and Eastern Kosi Flood Embankments which were completed between 1955—1959. Subsequently, some works were allotted in the excavation of Eastern Kosi Main Canal and its branches and distributaries. By this time the Bharat Sewak Samaj had developed suitable organisation for handling bigger and more complicated jobs, like construction of buildings and canal structures and also supply of bricks. At present they are doing earthwork in canals and embankments, supply of bricks, construction of small and medium type and canal structures and buildings.

Three forms of public co-operation were arranged for the execution of the Project works, namely, (i) *shramdan*, i.e., unpaid

voluntary labour, (*ii*) the execution of the work through *Gram Panchayats* and labour co-operation and (*iii*) the execution of the work by the individuals selected by the Bharat Sewak Samaj not necessarily from the labour co-operatives and *Gram Panchayats*.

The organisational pattern of the *Bharat Sewak Samaj* in the Kosi has been changing from time to time according to the adjustment demanded by the changing conditions of work and also from the experience gained in course of execution of the various works allotted to the *Bharat Sewak Samaj*. To start with, work was taken up on the Kosi Embankments and to execute the same, the *Bharat Sewak Samaj* set up a Central Committee, styled as the Project Construction Committee, a 12 men body with the convenor, the *Bharat Sewak Samaj*, Bihar, as the Chairman and a member as the Secretary. This Committee had a Technical Adviser and included representatives of the State *Panchayat Parishad* and the district wings of the *Bharat Sewak Samaj* and the *Panchayat Parishad*. It was a policy-making body which in consultation with the Project authorities, framed the programme of the work and the annual budget of the organisation. The field executive responsibility was discharged by the Secretary, assisted by two influential local organisers, each in charge of the Eastern and Western Kosi Embankments. They were assisted by the Advisory Committees of the leading public workers. The work on each embankment was divided into a number of points. Each point-in-charge who was a local public worker of repute, held charge of two to three miles of the embankments and was responsible for co-ordinating activities of the unit leaders in his charge and for ensuring progress of work.

Mobilisation of local resources could be done most effectively through *Gram Panchayats*, Co-operative Societies and other institutions. While the scheme of public co-operation was being discussed, the Project administration got a drive launched for the formation of *Gram Panchayats* and within 6 months from October, 1954 to March, 1955, a network of these institutions covered the area of work. The work was allotted to the accredited Societies and the *Bharat Sewak Samaj* also set up their own units in some places. The representatives to whom work was allotted were denominated as unit leaders.

In the approved scheme of work of the *Bharat Sewak Samaj* 90 per cent earnings is to be paid to the individual labourers, 5 per cent spent on organisation expenses and the remaining 5 per cent over social objectives, like provision of drinking water, schools and roads, etc., in the village homes of the labourers working for the Project.

In the first working season the *Bharat Sewak Samaj* was allotted eight miles of the Embankment on the western side and nine miles on the eastern side, out of which half mile near Bhutaha was reserved for work through *shramdan*, on the western side and

one mile near Bairia on the eastern side. The rest of the work was distributed among 29 *Gram Panchayats* on the western side and 27 *Gram Panchayats* and labour co-operatives on the eastern side. In the first working season, i.e., 1954-55, the total earthwork involved was 668 lakh cft., out of which 451 lakh cft. was done. In the 2nd working season the *Bharat Sewak Samaj* took up the residual work along with new work in 11 miles on the Western and 10 miles in the Eastern Embankments. This involved about 1,324 lakh cft. out of which about 1,037 lakh cft. was done in that season. The residual work was completed in the subsequent year. In the subsequent working seasons, i.e., 1956-57 and 1957-58 the *Bharat Sewak Samaj* did 749 lakh cft., and 937 lakh cft., out of the total quantity of 1,676 and 1,004 lakh cft. The balance work were completed in all respect by 1959. This relates to the construction of Eastern and Western Flood Embankments only.

The *Bharat Sewak Samaj* switched on to the excavation of canals from the working season 1957-58. Their output was 542 lakh cft., 1,040 lakh cft., 814 lakh cft. and 1,456 lakh cft., in 1957-58, 1958-59, 1959-60 and 1960-61, respectively.

In the beginning, tools and implements were supplied by the Project Administration free of charge to the unit leaders. The unit leaders were, however, required to reimburse the Project for tools and implements lost or damaged beyond normal depreciation.

The Project Administration undertook to provide labour amenities such as hutted accommodations, drinking water-supply, lighting, sanitation, medical treatment and recreation, etc.; the details are—

(*i*) hutted accommodation—28 hutments were provided in each mile of the embankments;

(*ii*) water-supply—ten hand tube-wells were sunk in each mile of the embankments;

(*iii*) sanitation—ten bore hole latrines were provided in each mile of the embankments;

(*iv*) lighting—every hutment was supplied two hurricane lanterns for lighting purposes, besides two for street lighting;

(*v*) medical and public health facilities—a six-bedded indoor hospital was set up for each of the embankments. Besides, medical centres under a compounder or a dresser were established at every four miles of the embankments. First aid medicine chests were also distributed in every two miles of the embankments. To control epidemics mass inoculation was arranged; and

(*vi*) recreation—a community centre in every two miles of the embankment was established fitted with a radio set, amplifiers, information books, daily newspapers, indoor and outdoor games, etc. Cinema shows were also arranged by the Kosi Project Department.

A very remarkable feature of the work on the public co-operation sector was the mustering of a large labour force particularly in the construction of embankments in the years 1955 to 1957, which was a rush job and there was virtually a race between the rising embankment and rising flood. The peak labour strength of 20,000 per day (average) was achieved at one time in February, 1956, out of which the *Bharat Sevak Samaj* contributed about 10,000, i.e., 50 per cent of the total labour force engaged in the embankment.

The public co-operation programme in the Kosi Project has resulted in inculcating a spirit of self-help and co-operative action among the people. Other obvious benefits from the public co-operation programme in the Kosi were (*i*) creating a sense of partnership between the people and the plan, (*ii*) producing local organising and taking work from labour and (*iii*) social well being of the community.

Apart from the above the very existence of public co-operation agency in the field of execution was instrumental in exercising a control on the rising rates of works. This has generally resulted from a sense of keen competition between the *Bharat Sevak Samaj* and other contracting agencies who were not allowed to have their monopoly in the field of project construction. Incidentally the local leadership engaged in the public co-operation venture was also of immense help in getting amicable possession of land for the construction of embankments and canals.

REHABILITATION.

The rehabilitation poses a very complicated problem for all River Valley Projects. The main difficulty is in obtaining possession of land for the rehabilitation sites. Formal land acquisition proceedings are quite dilatory and usually there is considerable resistance from the land owners when their lands are taken for rehabilitating the people affected by floods. The other most important cause of delay is the inevitable inertia of the people in leaving their old hearths and homes for practical as well as sentimental considerations. Even when the people shift outside the danger zone to the rehabilitation sites, there is an inherent human tendency to go back to the original places of habitation as soon as the danger is minimised. This problem was faced by the Kosi Project authorities also. This was, however, tackled to a good degree of success by building up the public opinion in favour of scheme and availing the house building grants.

Unfortunately, the embanked space, an area of about 2,60,000 acres contains 300 villages with a population of 1,15,000 souls. All possible future changes in the channel configuration are bound to take place in the limited embanked areas, resulting in greater pressure on the villages situated therein. Keeping these in view, the Kosi Control Board sanctioned the rehabilitation scheme costing Rs. 2.12 crores in 1957.

The entire embanked area of about 2,60,000 acres is not likely to become unfit for cultivation. In riverine tracts, while some lands get sanded or eroded, some land is formed and some get improved in quality. From the practical standpoint, payment of compensation for the cultivable lands within the embankments does not help, because it will not be possible to find elsewhere the necessary cultivable area for such a larger population. Moreover, if the total value (of Rs. 10 to 11.5 crores) of all the assets has to be paid for, the Project cost would increase disproportionately.

The rehabilitation scheme has, therefore, been drawn up keeping the above points in view. Our scheme consists of two aspects, viz., permanent rehabilitation and temporary rehabilitation.

(I) The scheme of permanent rehabilitation is—

(*a*) equivalent area of homestead land at a reasonable distance from the embankments on the land side so that the villagers may live as close as possible to their cultivable land within the embankments;

(*b*) acquisition of an additional area equal to 40 per cent for common purposes like roads, lands for schemes, shelter for cattle and playground, etc.;

(*c*) house building grants equivalent to the full value of house left on the river side;

(*d*) drinking water facilities in the form of wells, tube-wells, tanks, etc.; and

(*e*) boats to be used as means of communication to and from the agricultural lands on the river side.

(II) The scheme for temporary rehabilitation provides temporary shelter to villagers living in the river side whose houses are affected by the flood water during the rainy season. The villagers so rehabilitated temporarily on safer sites return to their respective old houses after the floods recede. This arrangement of temporary rehabilitation has to be made only for a year or so, i.e., until rehabilitation at a permanent site is settled for the people.

Out of 300 villages lying between the embankments 47 have shifted outside the embanked space on the eastern and western sides. A sum of Rs. 74.79 lakhs has so far been spent on rehabilitation till March, 1963.

NECESSITY OF IRRIGATION.

Excepting for a small area in the Champaran district, North Bihar mainly depends on rainfall in corresponding failure of crops. The failure of the rainfall is not infrequent and hence there is acute need for irrigation in the North Bihar.

Aghani rice is the main crop in this area and it requires a good rainfall at the end of May and beginning of June to facilitate preparation of grounds and for growth of seedlings. More rain is required in July and August for transplantation. Good rainfall is again required during *Hathia Nakshatra* (end of September and beginning of October) for maturing of the crop. Failure of rains during *Hathia* results in serious loss and damage to crops, causing scarcity and famine. That there is shortage of rainfall in October in this area will be apparent from the following statistics for Purnea district for a period of 48 years:—

(*i*) Number of years with rainfall less than an inch—11.

(*ii*) Number of years with rainfall between 1 and 2 inches—10.

(*iii*) Number of years with rainfall between 2 and 3 inches—3.

(*iv*) Number of years with rainfall between 3 to 4 inches—8.

(*v*) Number of years with rainfall over 4 inches—16.

Thus, out of 48 years, 32 years have rainfall less than 4″ in the month of October, or failure occurs for a year in every three years. This shows great necessity of providing irrigational facilities to this area for protecting it against scarcity or famine conditions.

Apart from the consideration of the needs of the foodgrains in the locality or the desirability of providing protection against famines in the Kosi area, the position of foodgrains in India as a whole calls for vigorous measures to make up the progressively increasing shortage in the country. The increase in food production can be achieved by the use of fertilisers in larger quantities, by using improved seeds or by bringing fresh areas under cultivation but above all by the introduction of irrigation in areas that are already under cultivation but depend upon rain as the only source of water.

Besides foodgrains, India is greatly in need of raw jute and this need has become acute since the partition of the country as bulk of the jute-producing area has gone out to Pakistan. This area is eminently suited for jute cultivation, but for want of assured irrigation and improved drainage a considerable increase in jute cultivation is expected as water will be available not only for irrigation but also for steeping the jute. That will go a long way to obviate the present shortage and will greatly help in earning the much needed dollars.

POSSIBILITY OF IRRIGATION.

The Kosi Eastern Main Canal taking off from the Hanumannagar Barrage will be capable of irrigating the whole of Saharsa and Purnea districts on the east bank of the Kosi excepting a small strip at the northern extremeties of the two districts. The originally sanctioned Project was designed to irrigate the area up to the Panar river on the east and up to Bhenga *dhar* on the west. The area between Bhenga *dhar* and Eastern Embankment was left out of command as it was thought that the old *dhars* of the Kosi river flowing in this area would be resuscitated for diverting about 50,000 cusecs of flood water for reducing the peak flood in the Kosi. Later investigations reveal that there will be little advantage in resuscitating these old *dhars*. Hence, it was considered that this area should also be brought under command in the Third Plan period. The new scheme was sanctioned under the name of Rajpur Canal System. Including the Rajpur Canal system the eastern canal will irrigate the following areas:—

District.	Gross commanded area in lakh acre.	Culturable commandable area in lakh acre.	Annual irrigation.
Purnea	12.00	8.00	9.27
Saharsa—			
(*i*) Original Scheme ..	6.23	4.08	4.77
(*ii*) Rajpur Canal System	4.91	3.27	3.97
	23.14	15.35	18.01

THE EXISTING AND FUTURE CROP PATTERN.

Aghani rice is the principal crop of this area. The distribution and percentage of different kinds of crops in relation to gross area and culturable commandable area in the Purnea district, is as below:—

Crops.	Percentage over gross area.	Percentage over culturable commandable area.
1. *Bhadai* paddy	7.06	10.60
2. Maize	4.93	7.40
3. Jute	5.49	8.02
4. Sugarcane	0.08	0.10
5. Tobacco	0.21	0.30
6. Other *Bhadai* and hot weather crops	0.83	1.30
7. *Aghani* rice	34.35	51.50
8. Other *Aghani* crops . ..	2.35	3.50
9. *Rabi* (wheat and barley), etc. ..	6.20	9.30
10. Other *rabi* crops	12.30	18.50
11. Orchards	1.20	1.80
Total	75.00	112.50

With the introduction of Irrigation, the crop pattern is to be as below:—

Crops.	Existing percentage to culturable commandable area.	Expected percentage after introduction of irrigation.
1. *Bhadai* paddy	10.60	12.00
2. Jute	8.20	15.00
3. Sugarcane	0.10	3.00
4. *Aghani* paddy	51.50	65.00
5. *Rabi*	9.30	20.00
6. Maize and other crops not requiring irrigation.	32.80	20.00
Total	112.50	135.00

Experience on Sone and Tribeni canals has shown that with canal irrigation cultivators tend to grow more of *aghani* paddy, therefore, the intensity of *aghani* paddy has been taken as 65 per cent of the irrigable area. Jute is in great demand and, hence, it will develop much with assured irrigation. Therefore, intensity for jute has been doubled. Similarly, there is possibility of increased cultivation in sugarcane and *rabi* crops, hence, the intensity has been increased.

The Canal System.

The main canal, 27 miles long after taking off from the Kosi Barrage, runs in south-east direction for a length of 10 miles, and then terminates into the river Parman on the east of Jogbani-Katihar Railway line. It crosses the major *dhars* Haiya, Bochaha, Sursar, Kajra, besides, about 12 smaller *dhars*.

Irrigation will be effected through 5 branch canals including the Rajpur Branch Canal. A small belt of about 1½ miles width will also be irrigated on the north of the main canal by distributaries taking off directly from the main canal. The branch canals are—

(i) *Murliganj Branch Canal.*—This canal takes off from the main canal at R. D. 43.80. It is about 40 miles long. This will irrigate 1.96 lakh acres of land in Saharsa district between the two old *dhars* of the Kosi, known as Bhenga *dhar* and Murliganj *dhar*.

(ii) *Jankinagar Branch Canal.*—This takes off from the main canal at R. D. 78.60. It is about 51 miles long. This will irrigate 4.81 lakh acres of land in Saharsa and Purnea districts, between the rivers Sursar and Fariane.

(*iii*) *Purnea Branch Canal.*—This takes off from the main canal at R. D. 131.20. It is about 40 miles long. This will irrigate about 4.18 lakh acres of land in Purnea district, between the rivers Fariane and the Jogbani-Katihar Railway line.

(*iv*) *Araria Branch Canal.*—This takes off from the tail end of the canal. It is 36 miles long. This will irrigate about 1.82 lakh acres of land in the Purnea district, between Jogbani-Katihar Railway line and river Panar.

(*v*) *Rajpur Branch Canal.*—This canal takes off from the main canal at R. D. 14.50 below the proposed Power House. The canal has been aligned straight up to 13 R. D. and then it takes a turn towards west. Four sub-branch canals namely Madhepura, Gamharia, Saharsa and Supaul respectively take off from here. The canal passes through Kalaiya, Samada, Baisi Chahala and Kailanpura. This will provide irrigation to an area of 3.97 lakh acres of land in Saharsa district.

Progress of Canal Works.

Eastern Kosi Canal System.

The total quantity of the earthwork involved in the eastern Kosi Canal System is 237.60 crores cft. This is nearing completion. There are about 1,650 canal structures of various types out of which 900 are either completed or are in progress. There has been some difficulty in making better progress with regard to canal structures. This has been due to the difficult nature of the work, bad transport and communication facilities and dearth of contractors and skilled labourers. The Chinese attack added fuel to the fire as we had to relieve some of our resources for more important work of the Nation. The situation is, however, being tackled and some irrigation will be given in 1964, as programmed.

Originally the idea was that the Project would dig canals up to 5 cusecs discharge only, beyond which the cultivators would take over and construct the field channels for irrigating their lands. Later on it was considered that this would present immense difficulties because the people of Purnea, Saharsa and Darbhanga who are not accustomed to artificial irrigation practices would be reluctant to do their part of the jobs. The Planning Commission have, therefore, advised the Project to go down to 1 cusec channels. This would cost an additional sum of about Rs. 6 crores which was not provided in the Project estimate. The construction of village channels will have to be tackled in a phased sequence so that their completion is well synchronised with the completion of the individual branch canals and their distributary systems.

Necessary legislation for their construction as well as for levy of irrigation cess and betterment has been initiated. Compulsory irrigation cess is proposed to be levied as a part of the water rate with a view to inducing the people to make use of the irrigation facilities extended to them thereby accelerating the pace of utilisation of the irrigation potential.

Rajpur Canal System.

As said earlier, this comes under new scheme and has been sanctioned for Third Five-Year Plan. In the initial stages there could not be as much progress as the Project Engineers wanted for want of funds. But as soon as this problem was solved the work was taken in full swing. Earthwork in excavation of Rajpur Branch Canals and its 4 sub-branches is in progress. More than 50 per cent of the earthwork has already been done. Out of the total 206 of canal structures, work in 28 has already been taken up.

Additional yield.

As a result of the completion of the originally sanctioned Eastern Kosi Canal System and Rajpur Canal System the districts of Saharsa and Purnea will get the additional yield of 123.48 lakh maunds as detailed below:—

Name of the system.	Crop.	Additional yield in lakh maunds.	Monetary value in lakh rupees.
(*i*) Eastern Kosi Canal System.	Jute ..	11.95	298.75
	Paddy ..	41.71	552.66
	Rabi ..	8.64	120.06
	Sugarcane ..	45.00	112.50
	Total of (*i*) ..	107.30	1084.87
(*ii*) Rajpur Canal System	Jute ..	1.30	32.50
	Paddy ..	6.71	88.91
	Rabi ..	3.92	54.88
	Sugarcane ..	4.25	10.63
	Total of (*ii*) ..	16.18	186.92
	Grand Total	123.48	1271.79

Western Canal.

For further utilisation of the irrigation potential created by the construction of the Kosi Barrage, as already stated, two schemes namely, the Western Kosi Canal Scheme and the Rajpur Canal Scheme were sanctioned for Third Five-Year Plan. Enough has

already been said about the Rajpur Canal System. A few words may be said about the Western Kosi Canal System also. The Western Kosi Canal takes off from the Kosi Barrage to irrigate the land in the district of Darbhanga of North Bihar and the district of Saptari in Nepal. Its salient features are given below:—

(*i*) Cost of the scheme—Rs. 13,49,39,000.

(*ii*) Discharge in the main canal—7,000 cusecs.

(*iii*) Length of the main canal—70 miles.

(*iv*) Irrigation and yield to Nepal—

(*a*) C. C. A.*—0.35 lakh acres.

(*b*) C. C. A.—0.23 lakh acres.

(*c*) Annual irrigation—0.26 lakh acres.

(*d*) Additional yield expected annually—

Aghani paddy—0.44 lakh maunds valued at Rs. 5.83 lakhs.

Bhadai paddy—0.06 lakh maunds valued at Rs. 0.80 lakh.

Rabi—0.12 lakh maunds valued at Rs. 1.68 lakhs.

Jute—0.10 maunds valued at Rs. 2.50 lakhs.

Sugarcane—0.09 lakh maunds valued at Rs 0.15 lakhs.

Total—1.31 lakh maunds valued at Rs. 10.96 lakhs.

(*v*) Irrigation and yield to Darbhanga district—

(*a*) C. C. A.—9.76 lakh acres.

(*b*) C. C. A.—6.45 lakh acres.

(*c*) Annual irrigation—8.05 lakh acres.

(*d*) Additional yield expected annually—

Jute—3.90 lakh maunds valued at Rs. 97.50 lakhs.

Paddy—30.64 lakh maunds valued at Rs. 405.98 lakhs.

Rabi—7.76 lakh maunds valued at Rs. 108.64 lakhs.

Maize—0.60 lakh maunds valued at Rs. 7.20 lakhs.

Sugarcane—12.00 lakh maunds valued at Rs. 30.00 lakhs.

Total—60.90 lakh maunds valued at Rs 6.49.32.

Irrigation schemes for Nepal.

There are two schemes to provide irrigational facilities to Nepal. It is proposed to provide irrigation to an area of 36,000 acres of land in the district of Saptari by the Western Canal. Facts and figures about this have already been given. There is another scheme known as Chatra Canal Scheme estimated at a cost of Rs. 4 crores

* C. C. A.—Culturable Commandable Area.

for irrigating 1,83,000 acres of land in the district of Morang and yield additional produce valued at Rs. 85 lakhs (approximately). The main canal takes off from the foot of hills of the Himalayan range close to Chatra Bazar in Nepal. The main canal itself is about 35 miles long. The total length of the distributaries would be nearly 165 miles. The canal system will necessitate construction of about 600 numbers of canal structures big and small. Work on the scheme has made good progress. The entire cost of this scheme is being borne by the Government of India but the execution is being done by the Kosi Project Administration as an agent of the Government of India under the Indo-Nepal Aid Programme. Liaison between the Project Administration and His Majesty's Government of Nepal is maintained through the Indian Aid Mission and the Indian Embassy at Kathmandu.

Power generation.

Owing to the persistent demand of the people of the area, the Government have decided to set up a hydro-electric power house with an installed capacity of 20,000 K. W. in the eastern main canals. Though the power output from the station would be small, yet it would go a long way to meet the immediate needs of small village industries which cannot develop for want of power. Fifty per cent of the power generated would be supplied to His Majesty's Government of Nepal and 50 per cent will be utilised in the Bihar portion. Many industries like paper, sugar and jute and other small industries are expected to develop in these areas.

The allotment of the construction of the power house has already been made and the work will shortly start.

THE ORGANISATIONAL SET UP OF THE KOSI PROJECT.

The Kosi Control Board.

The Kosi Control Board has been constituted by the State Government in consultation with the Government of India. It consists of the following:—

(*a*) State—(*i*) Chief Minister, (*ii*) Irrigation Minister, (*iii*) Deputy Irrigation Minister, (*iv*) Development Commissioner, (*v*) Chief Engineer and (*vi*) Chief Administrator.

(*b*) Centre—(*i*) A representative of the Ministry of Irrigation and Power, (*ii*) a representative of the Ministry of Finance, and (*iii*) a representative of Central Water and Power Commission.

Chief Secretary, Finance Secretary and Irrigation Secretary of the State and representative of the Planning Commission and Financial Adviser are invited to attend the meetings. Chief Administrator of the Project functions as Member-Secretary.

The Control Board initiates and discusses fully important matters like programmes, targets and economy of construction. It reviews the position in regard to these matters and gives suitable directions to the Chief Engineer and the Chief Administrator.

Chief Administrator.—In this Project, there is a Chief Administrator of the status of a Divisional Commissioner. He is a member of the Control Board. To relieve the Chief Engineer of non-technical work like land acquisition, rehabilitation, medical, welfare and purchase, etc., departments concerned with these subjects function directly under him. Of course, the Chief Engineer is consulted on all important issues.

The Chief Administrator functions as the Secretary to the Government also. He is assisted by an Additional Secretary, two Deputy Secretaries and an Under Secretary. In addition there are separate Directorates for Land Acquisition, Rehabilitation and Purchase, etc., directly under the Chief Administrator.

Chief Accounts Officer-cum-*Financial Adviser.*—In the Kosi Project there is a Financial Adviser-*cum*-Chief Accounts Officer. He functions as Financial Adviser of the Project Administration and is appointed by the State Government in consultation with the Government of India. The Chief Accounts Officer is assisted by seven Accounts Officers who audit the papers of the officers of the Project and advise them in regard to financial matters.

The Engineering set-up.—There is a Chief Engineer of the Project with his headquarters at Patna. He is the over-all incharge of the execution of the Project and is assisted by several Superintending Engineers and his subordinate Engineers. For the technical matters he is the final authority but generally he seeks advice from the Central Water and Power Commission also on important matters. There is a Directorate of Designs at Patna under his direct guidance.

PRESENT SCHEME IS NOT THE FINAL SOLUTION OF THE KOSI.

It must be mentioned here that the present scheme is not the final reply of the Kosi problems. The final and lasting answer lies in the construction of a dam across the Kosi as well as some check dams across its tributaries. The construction of the dam must immediately follow to make the gradient control more effective and levees to serve the purpose for which they have been put up. A suitable site for the dam has already been located at Kothar. The site is located in a highly seismic zone of Bihar-Nepal Earthquake of 1934. It is also about 200 miles from the epicentre of the great Assam Earthquake of 1897. Now, that a number of dams have been built in similar seismic areas in U. S. A., Italy and Japan, it should not be at all difficult to put up a structure

with necessary precautions and provisions for safeguards against the probable earthquake effects. It is hoped that this project will be included in the Fourth Plan so that the present construction unit may be put on to this new job.

A 510 feet high dam at Kothar can store about 3.71 million acre ft. of water of which 1.62 million acre ft. will form the dead storage to provide silt reserve and minimum head for power generation, the remaining 1.69 million acre ft. being available for power generation, irrigation and navigation. The structure will roughly cost Rs. 50 crores. The following benefits are expected to be derived from the dam:—

(*i*) To trap all the harmful silt behind the dam and increase the life of the Barrage to the extent of 70 years or more.

(*ii*) To generate about 1 million K. W. cheap hydro-electric power.

Investigations are on way to finalise the scheme. It is expected that a preliminary project report will be drawn up by the Central Water and Power Commission in the near future for which the required data are being sent as and when required.

CHATRA RESEARCH STATION.

A few words are required about a Soil Conservation Research Station which has a bearing on the Kosi problems.

There is a Research Station working under the Soil Conservation Board, Ministry of Food and Agriculture, Government of India at Chatra on the bank of the Kosi just where the river debouches from a gorge along the foot-hills to enter the plains. Although the location of the Research Centre is in Nepal, a coverage is necessary as they are doing extremely valuable work. The following quotation summarises:—

"The aim of the Research Station is to collect data and educate the people of Nepal in understanding their special problems. There was immediate need for restoring Nature's balance and preserving the cushion of vegetation along the slopes that protects the friable upper crust of the soil. In many places the friability runs deep into the hill sides that bring about land slides under the pressure of heavy rains and floods.

"At the Chatra centre, in the midst of a dense forest with a steep hill on one side and the plains rolling out on the other, I found extensive model experiments on a cross section of the terrain from the foothills to the plains including the bhawar, terrains and plains.

"Here the soil scientists at the centre gauge the run-off and sediment movement over the valley to measured scales. This was later correlated with rainfall for quantitative relationship between watershed, sediment and movement.

"Since man could not improve upon Nature's mosaic of vegetation that it provides against erosion the best he could do was to select plants with an eye to their adaptability and economic utility. Several species of legumes and grasses, some of them well known in the line of soil conservation, were being tried out in difficult and varying conditions. The pine-apple plant was one of them that was found very useful in this region.

"Data on agriculture, grass-land and forestry practice were being collected for complete scientific reconnaissance over the Kosi watersheds.

"The Chatra Soil Conservation Research Centre runs a free advisory service for the benefit of individuals and organization and provides a working knowledge of the various techniques in a complicated work in the widest possible areas and the largest possible number of people. It was doing its very best to bring home to the people of Nepal the truth of their well-known folklore *'Nepal Ko dhan hario van'* (Nepal's wealth—its green forests).

"Properly managed, the forests in Nepal as everywhere else yield timber and food for man, provides grazing ground for livestock and protect the soil against the battering force of rain drops and corrosive flow of water. The forest litter and humus are effective absorbents that were beneficial to vegetation and soil alike. Nepal forests sustain the kholas or gulley streams as perennial rivulets and prevent them from turning into flashy hill streams that go dry within hours of the heaviest rain.

"It was necessary for the Nepalese peasant than any other to know his land and the means of protecting it against the conditions and forces of erosion. He could then draw up a blueprint for conservation, sustenance and abundance"*. . . . .

* *Statesman*, Calcutta, July 22nd 1963. (Published with permission).

CHAPTER IX.

Economic Trends and Miscellaneous Occupations.

Some factors indicating the economic trends of the district have been indicated in different texts on 'People', 'Agriculture and Irrigation', 'Industries', 'Banking, Trade and Commerce', etc. In this text there will be some repetitions.

Livelihood Pattern of the District.

The general population has been divided into two broad livelihood categories, namely, Agricultural classes and Non-Agricultural classes in 1951 census. These two classes have been sub-divided into four groups and each group has three sub-sections. The following table will show the break-up figures of each livelihood class*:—

Principal livelihood classes.	Number.	Percentage.	Self-supporting.	Non-earning dependents.	Earning dependents.
1	2	3	4	5	6
A. Agricultural Classes	12,23,460	93.55	3,37,806	8,16,698	68,936
(i) Cultivators of land wholly or mainly owned and their dependents.	5,66,634	43.32	1,47,381	4,00,698	18,555
(ii) Cultivators of land wholly or mainly un-owned and their dependents.	2,63,347	20.12	79,765	1,71,946	11,036
(iii) Cultivating labourers and their dependents.	3,88,055	29.67	1,09,390	2,40,240	38,425
(iv) Non-cultivating owners of land, agricultural rent-receiver and their dependents.	5,424	00.44	1,270	3,814	340
B. Non-agricultural Classes.	84,738	6.45	21,052	57,754	5,932
(v) Production (other than cultivation).	14,594	1.11	4,341	8,072	2,187
(vi) Commerce ..	33,684	2.57	8,750	22,801	2,185
(vii) Transport ..	1,375	0.10	412	867	96
(viii) Other services and miscellaneous sources.	35,085	2.67	7,549	26,014	1,522

* *District Census Hand-Book of Saharsa*, 1951, pages 6—9.

The perusal of the foregoing table shows that 3,58,858 persons or 27.43 per cent of the total population (13,08,198) are self-supporting, i.e., who are economically active persons. The rest 9,49,340 or 72.57 per cent of the total population are earning and non-earning dependents. The proportion of earning dependents (74,888) constitutes 5.72 per cent of the total population and they are able to supplement the income of their families. As many as 8,74,452 persons or 66.85 per cent of the total population are entirely dependent for their maintenance on the earnings of others. This large proportion of wholly dependents is composed of not only of children and old and infirm persons but also of womenfolk who in the absence of suitable handicrafts and other village industries are unable to supplement the earnings of the householders. They do, no doubt, look after their domestic duties and thereby reduce the possible expenditure on servants. A large number of women of agriculturist families particularly of such castes which are poorer, work on the fields during certain agricultural operations like sowing and harvesting. Most of the women population could be described, however, as economically dependent. The foregoing table also shows that 12,23,460 persons or 93.50 per cent of the total population falls under agricultural classes and the remaining 84,738 persons or 6.50 per cent under non-agricultural classes. It may be compared with the two neighbouring districts of Darbhanga and Purnea which have according to the census of 1951, 89.11 per cent and 87.80 per cent agriculturist population and 10.9 and 12.20 per cent non-agriculturist population respectively. The comparison with these two districts shows that Saharsa district with 93.55 per cent has got the highest population engaged in agricultural pursuits while lowest in non-agricultural pursuits with 6.55 per cent. The all-India average of agriculturist and non-agriculturist population according to the census of 1951 is 68.10 per cent and 31.90 per cent respectively while the average for Bihar is 86.04 per cent and 13.06 per cent respectively. There is no other State in India where the predominance of agricultural population is so high. This is also partially due to the systematic increase in the population of the district. It may be mentioned here that in 1961 census there has been nothing less than a population explosion in this district. There has been an accretion of 31.75 per cent of population in 1961 census and this matter has been discussed elsewhere. Detailed figures of 1961 census under different categories are, however, not available. The population associated with agriculture is most marked in Champaran and Saharsa among the districts of North Bihar.

From the perusal of the preceding table it appears that the proportion of owner cultivator, i.e., cultivators of land wholly or mainly owned (livelihood class I) is 43.32 per cent of the total population. In the North Bihar Plain as a whole owner-cultivators form 48.25 per cent of the total population.

The cultivators of land mainly unowned (livelihood class II) constitute 20.12 per cent of the total population. They are larger in Saharsa except Purnea in the North Bihar Plain. In these two districts cultivators of land mainly unowned, i.e., *bataidars* constitute more than 20 per cent of the agricultural population*.

Cultivating labourers (livelihood class III) form 29.67 per cent of the total population and 31.7 per cent of the agricultural population. The reason for the large percentage of the cultivating labourer in the district is mainly owing to the absence of alternative employment in the industries and other avenues of employment. The district has no large industries and the few cottage industries discussed elsewhere do not employ any sizeable population.

Non-cultivating owners of land and agricultural rent-receivers (livelihood class IV) number a few. They constitute about 0.44 per cent of the total population. In the North Bihar Plain their proportion is highest in Purnea (1.4 per cent). The corresponding figure for Bhagalpur is 1 per cent. This class has now been liquidated due to passing of the Bihar Land Reforms Act, 1950.

The non-agricultural population, as stated before, constitutes about 6.45 per cent of the total population. In production other than cultivation (livelihood class V) only 1.11 per cent of the population is absorbed. It appears that the proportion of persons deriving their means of livelihood from production other than cultivation is lowest in Bihar among the States of the Indian Union.

Commerce (livelihood class VI) absorbs 2.57 per cent of the total population. In Bihar about 3.4 per cent of the total population derives their livelihood from retail and wholesale trade or commerce

Transport (livelihood class VII) has only 1,375 adherents or 0.10 per cent of the total population. It is because the transport services have not fully developed in the district. There are a few long distance roads with buses and trucks running all the twelve months.

Miscellaneous and other services (livelihood class VIII) includes the residual class. This class will be discussed later in the section under Miscellaneous Occupations. This class constitutes about 2.67 per cent of the total population in the district.

In the 1961 census details of livelihood pattern, as indicated above, are not yet available. They are still under compilation. But we can have some basic information of the livelihood pattern from the "Census of India—Paper no. 1 of 1962"†. According to this publication the total population of the district in 1961 was 17,23,566

* *Census of India*, 1951, vol. V, Bihar, Part I—Report, p. 74.

† Published by the Manager of Publications, Government of India Press, Delhi-8.

(males 8,86,440, females 8,37,126). For economic purposes the population has been divided into two categories—Workers and Non-workers. Out of 8,86,440 males and 8,37,126 females, 5,06,299 and 2,79,464 respectively have been enumerated under workers. Thus according to 1961 census about 45.5 per cent of the total population are workers and the rest are non-workers.

Level of Prices.

The level of prices has a bearing both on the real income and the standard of living of the people. Rise in the prices with the income being constant lowers the purchasing power of money and affects the consumer directly.

One of the most significant economic trends since the turn of the present century is the upward rise in the prices of the agricultural products. The price-level rose much higher than in the preceding century and it affected economically the people of this area also. As mentioned elsewhere the present area of the Saharsa district remained a part of the Bhagalpur district till 31st March, 1954. Hence the picture given in the old Bhagalpur Gazetteer, regarding the level of prices of essential commodities holds good for this area also. It mentions as follows:—

"Taking four staple articles of everyday consumption we find the following prices in seers per rupee prevailed in the years given, at the end of March each year, in Bhagalpur:—

—	Wheat.	Rice.	Gram.	Salt.
1895	14.3	17.10	18.15	10.1
1900	13.4	13.14	17.14	10.0
1907	7.8	8.3	8.12	20.0
1908	9.8	8.14	12.10	20.0

The very marked rise towards the last years quoted is due directly to the extreme local scarcity that prevailed in those years and less directly to the general rise in prices that has been noticed all over India. Various explanations based on diverse economic theories have been put forward to account for this very widespread increase in the cost of the barest necessaries of life. Perhaps the soundest, if not the most plausible as well, is that based mainly on considerations of currency."*

From the perusal of the foregoing table mentioned in the quotation, it is gathered that there was a fall in the price of salt which may be attributed to the reduction of the duty on that commodity.

* *Bhagalpur District Gazetteer* by J. Byrne (1911), pages 113-114.

In addition to the above reason, the prices of foodgrains also rose because of the malpractice of the dealers and merchants. What they did actually was that the larger firms at the chief commercial centres purchased the entire stock in the village before the local dealers could have any chance to offer a bid. There was an apprehension of scarcity in Supaul subdivision in 1902 due to low rainfall and for want of its proper distribution. But due to the timely action taken by the Collector of Bhagalpur district, the distress was averted.

As mentioned in the *Bhagalpur District Gazetteer* (1962) at pages 352-53, agriculture in Supaul and Madhepura subdivisions, which then covered the entire area of the present Saharsa district, was adversely affected by the high flood of the Kosi in 1906 and as a result the distress was severe so long the flood lasted but when the flood water receded, there was a considerable deposit of silt over the lands which gave bumper crops of *bhadai* and *aghani* in the following year. Due to surplus production in this area Bhagalpur district was saved from one of the worst famines caused due to complete failure of *bhadai* and winter crops in other parts of the district in that year. Consequently, there was also a large migration of landless labourers from the south of the district of Bhagalpur to Madhepura and Supaul subdivisions and also to rice lands of Bengal proper. The occasional rise, in later years, in the prices in Supaul and Madhepura subdivisions may also be attributed to the high floods of the Kosi which used to destroy the crops of the area. Moreover, cholera was rampant in this area from 1915 to 1916 which raised the death rate above the normal. However, in general the period, from 1911 to 1917, was good for agriculture.

The price level of most of the essential commodities in common with the other districts of the province was affected after the declaration of the First World War in 1914. At the beginning of the War the effect was not very perceptible. From 1917 onwards, the prices of imported articles like cloth, salt and kerosene oil began to increase and the position became acute. People particularly landless labourers and small artisans suffered as a result of the rise in the prices of imported commodities while the income remained almost the same. The increased prices of foodgrains improved the economic condition of the big and middle class cultivators as they began to get higher prices for their surplus produce. It is mentioned in the *Bhagalpur District Gazetteer* (1962) that the area under cultivation in Kishanganj thana of Madhepura subdivision had gone up.

The Census Report of 1911 mentions that Kishanganj thana borders on the water-logged area but as the river Kosi had for some years past not shown any marked tendency to shift its channels, there was a rapid expansion of cultivation in its south-eastern portion, which was till then a desolate tract of swamp and jungle.

It is also mentioned that at the time of enumeration in Kishanganj thana in 1911, there was an influx of non-resident cultivators who came with labourers to cut their crops. This extension of cultivation was partially helped by the opening of railway line from Mathahi to Madhepura in Madhepura subdivision.

During 1919 due to the aftermath of War and local famine and scarcity, the price of rice shot up to 3½ seers per rupee in some places during July and August against 6 seers in April of the same year but this was just a temporary phase and did not last long. In 1921 the crop in Supaul and Madhepura subdivisions was slightly damaged by the Kosi floods. Agriculture also suffered to some extent in Supaul subdivision due to Kosi floods of 1927 and 1929. Murliganj, a centre of trade in jute, maize and rice in Madhepura subdivision, was connected with Bihariganj by railways—Bihariganj is still an important trade centre. It is reported that the price-level of the foodgrains remained at high level till 1929. In absence of authentic records the prices during this period, given in the revised *Purnea District Gazetteer** may be taken into account which holds good for this area also. It mentions that rice was being sold on the average 5 to 6 seers per rupee, wheat 6 to 6½ seers and gram and maize 7 to 8 seers per rupee. It further mentions that the world-wide slump which ensued from the closing months of 1929 brought in a sharp fall in the price of foodgrains. The agriculturists were hard hit. The downward trend of the prices continued till 1938.

The result of this fall in the prices of foodgrains was rather disastrous for cultivators. The district being primarily agricultural suffered terribly as a result of the agricultural depression. Some of the recurring expenditures, namely, land revenue and interest in face of low prices of foodgrain caused great hardship to the agricultural population. Arrears in payment of land revenue became the usual feature. Suspension of and remissions in land revenue had to be granted for temporary relief, but these steps were not adequate. It affected both the landlords and the tenants because none of them could meet their obligations. Arrears of rent began to accumulate and the landlords filed rent-suits in thousands in order to escape from the laws of limitation. An important effect of this depression was that agricultural holdings began to pass into the possession of the landlords and money-lenders in execution of decrees obtained for arrear of rent and default in payment of loans taken by the mortgage of holdings. There was a slump in engagements for casual labourers.

The price-level again soared high with the declaration of the Second World War in September, 1939. The expectation of prolongation of the War made the speculators hoard the stock in anticipation of sharper rise in the price of foodgrains and other

* *District Gazetteer of Purnea* (1963), p. 396.

commodities. This man-made scarcity of commodities in the open market pushed up the prices further. An attempt was made by the Government to control the price-line and to assure a fair distribution of the available commodities by opening up of Fair Price Shops, passing ordinances and imposing various restrictions.

Consumption was restricted and free movement of commodities was curtailed. Inter-district and inter-provincial embargoes were imposed. But in spite of all this there was a lot of blackmarketing of essential commodities including cloth. The price-line could hardly be held and prices rose very high. The price control measures were to some extent responsible in halting the upward swing in prices. It may be mentioned here that due to intermittent and often delayed supply of foodgrains, kerosene oil, sugar and other essential commodities, the Fair Price Shops did not work very well. The price-level of foodgrains of general consumption (such as rice, wheat and gram) from 1946 to 1950 has been shown in the table that follows.

The partially "suppressed type" inflation of the war period made a jerky outburst in the immediate post-war period under the impact of the pent up demand. The voluntary abstinance during war period ended and the people were eager to consume more goods without sizeable increase in the volume of goods supplied because of heavy war time depreciation of plants, machinery and labour unrest.

The mean wholesale prices from 1946 to 1950 are given in the following table*:—

[Price per maund]

Year.			Rice. (medium).	Wheat (red).	Gram.
			Rs.	Rs.	Rs.
1946	..	..	12.71	12.50	13.27
1947	..	..	18.79	15.58	19.66
1948	..	..	19.58	26.8	19.58
1949	..	..	23.35	23.8	14.75
1950	..	..	28.75	27.50	22.66

The above table shows the increasing tendency of the pric which almost doubled itself in 1950 in comparison with the pric 1946. In 1951 the price level shot up all the more but after

* The mean prices have been worked out from the figures given in the *District Census Hand-Book of Saharsa*, 1951, pages 100-101.

year it began to fall. This is evident from the index number of wholesale prices given below*:—

Base : *September*, 1939—100.

Year.	Rice.	Wheat.	Gram.
1950	732.0	716.8	506.9
1951	829.0	748.3	612.0
1952	745.6	672.2	584.9
1953	579.3	583.0	529.6
1954	426.9	461.5	329.5

Though the index number of wholesale prices is for the whole Bihar State, it is generally applicable to this district also with minor variations. From the above tables it seems that 1951 was the peak year for the increase in the prices of the commodities.

The Second World War ended in August, 1945 and steps were taken by the Government to convert the war-economy to a peace-economy. The popular national Government was set up at the Centre in 1946 and the Congress Party returned to power in Bihar in the same year.

The acute shortage of foodgrains and their continued high prices led to an all-out effort on the part of the State Government and larger sums were placed at the disposal of the different departments so as to bring more land under cultivation and also to increase the yield per acre. But these efforts had little effect till 1951. Agriculture suffered during 1946—51 due to Kosi floods and occasionally due to drought or excessive rain in this district. Cash crops like jute started replacing paddy and this was also a reason of the prices of grains going up.

The rise in the prices of essential commodities improved the condition of the big and middle class cultivators. But landless labourers, small cultivators and people having fixed income suffered more because of the unprecedented rise in the prices of foodgrains. The rise in the level of the wages of the agricultural labourers did not fully compensate.

The State Government had advanced a large amount by way of land improvement and agriculturists' loans every year. The details have been covered elsewhere. A major portion of the district (Bhagalpur including Saharsa) allotment of Rs. 25,000 for 1944-45 for land improvement loans was advanced to the people of Madhepura and Supaul police-stations for reclamation of waste lands. Another sum of Rs. 28,000 was sanctioned for the whole district of Bhagalpur comprising Madhepura and Supaul subdivisions for food relief in the same year. Reclamation of cultivable waste lands was encouraged to increase the total yield of grains. Irrigation works

* *Bihar Statistical Hand-Book*, 1955, published by the Directorate of Economics and Statistics, Bihar, p. 264.

were undertaken for the same purpose. Minor Irrigation Projects under the Grow More Food Campaign were also undertaken and according to the Land Revenue Administration Report for 1950-51, 54 minor irrigation schemes were completed in Madhepura subdivision and in Supaul subdivision a *bandh* and a canal were constructed.*

There was deterioration in the material condition of the people during 1950-51 due to heavy rainfall which damaged the *bhadai* crops. Drought thereafter in the same year damaged the *aghani* crops. *Hathia* rains failed completely. These were the reasons why the price-level of agricultural produce reached its peak in 1951.

As mentioned elsewhere in order to make up the shortage of foodgrains, Government again opened Fair Price Shops in order to enable the people to purchase grains at reasonable prices but there was little relief to the people due to insufficient and irregular supplies, poor qualities of grains and defective method of distribution.

Relief work was undertaken and minor irrigation schemes were extended. *Taccavi* and Land Improvement Loans were also given. A few enterprising cultivators, acting under the spurt of high prices of agricultural produce purchased tractors and pumping sets for improving agriculture. The Agriculture Department intensified its efforts in construction of wells, *bandhs*, etc., under its Grow More Food Scheme. This department has also been trying to increase the yield per acre by distributing better seeds and chemical manure, etc.

All these measures have brought in some improvement in agriculture. The prices began to fall from the year 1952. Due to favourable rainfall in 1953 there had been bumper *aghani* and *rabi* crops in 1953-54. The supply of paddy from Nepal side to this area has also been partly responsible for a fall in the price of this commodity.

But after 1954 the prices again began to rise. Though the figures of the prices of different commodities in the district are not available, but the prices per maund prevailing at Patna in September, 1954 and in Bihar State in September, 1957 which hold good for this district also, are shown here:—

Year.		Rice (medium).	Wheat (red).	Gram.
		Rs.	Rs.	Rs.
September, 1954 **	..	16.0	14.0	10.50
September, 1957 †	..	24.72	17.86	14.15

* *Bhagalpur District Gazetteer*, 1962, p. 362.

** *Quarterly Bulletin of Statistics, Bihar*, October, 1954, published by Director of Economics and Statistics, Bihar, p. 101.

† *Quarterly Bulletin of Statistics, Bihar*, October, 1957, p. 36.

The prices in 1957 were fairly high in comparison with the prices in 1954 but they were, however, less when compared with the prices prevailing in 1949, 1950 and 1951.

The slight upward movement in prices since 1957 still continues. After October, 1962 the big merchants and dealers tried to hoard essential commodities consequent upon the Chinese aggression to make unjustifiably higher profit and as such the price-level has gone up. But efforts are being made to stabilise the price-level. The working of the Fair Price Shops has been tightened up and control has been imposed upon sugar.

The Kosi barrage as mentioned elsewhere has been completed only in 1963. This project is a multi-purpose scheme and is calculated to irrigate thousands of acres more in Saharsa district along with large areas of Purnea and Darbhanga districts. It is expected that the people of Saharsa will be saved from the constant and often unexpected floods. It is expected that the agricultural prospects will considerably improve because of barrage and the irrigation canals that have been taken out of the barrage. The agricultural economy of the district, more or less, dependent on the vagaries of Kosi as much as on the rainfall is now bound to improve. The control of one turbulent factor has been hailed with joy as this will open out much better agricultural prospect.

LEVEL OF WAGES.

The discussion on the level of wages in the recently published rewritten *District Gazetteer of Bhagalpur* may be looked into for the general trends of the wages prevailing till 1954 when Saharsa was a part of Bhagalpur district. The level of wages naturally went up with the rise in the prices of the essential commodities discussed earlier.

The study of wage level is essential for a proper understanding of the standard of living of the people. Trend in wages can be studied under two heads—agricultural wages and non-agricultural wages.

So far the statistics of agricultural wages are concerned, they are very unsatisfactory and till recently no such data were collected on a uniform basis. Generally landless people who reside in rural areas offer themselves for agricultural labour. The cultivators who possess a large area of land require to engage labour and the small cultivators themselves do the agricultural work with the help of the members of their families. The agricultural labourers are of two types—one of permanent nature and the other of casual nature. Further, heavy agricultural operations like ploughing, irrigation and threshing, etc., are done by the male labourers, while lighter work such as transplantation and reaping is shared by women. The

variations in prices of food-crops did not affect them much as long as there were any agricultural operations in progress yielding a crop worth harvesting.

The *District Gazetteer of Bhagalpur* published in 1911 gives the wages of certain categories of labour for a few earlier years:—

—	1895.	1900.	1905.
	Annas.	Annas.	Annas.
Carpenter—			
Superior	8	8	8
Common	5	5	5
Blacksmith—			
Superior	8	8	8
Common	6	6	6
Gharami (i. e., thatcher, etc.)	6	6	6
Cooly—			
Man	3	3	3
Woman	1—6	1—6	1—6
Boy	1—6	1—6	1—6

It is found that from 1895 to 1916 there has not been any marked increase in the daily rate of wages. On the contrary it is evident from the following table that the daily rate of wages for a carpenter in 1916 was less than that of 1895, or 1900 or 1905. It seems that during these years (1905—1916) the wages were more or less constant. After 1916 a slight increase in the wages is noticed. A statement showing the rural wages in North Bhagalpur (which then comprised the area of Saharsa district) during the month of April, 1916 and 1924 is given here*:—

Year.	Skilled labour.				Unskilled labour.
	Blacksmith.	Carpenter.	Gharnia.	Ploughman.	
1	2	3	4	5	6
	Rs. a. p.	Rs. a. p.	Rs. a. p.	Rs. a. p.	Rs. a. p.
1916	0 6 6	0 4 6	0 4 3	0 2 9	0 3 0
1924	0 7 0	0 6 6	0 5 0	0 4 0	0 4 6

* *Bihar Satistical Hand-Book*, 1958, pages 240-241.

The tempo of increase in the wages continued in later years. During and after the Second World War when the prices of essential commodities had an unprecedented rise, the wages were also raised to meet the situation. In 1951 the wage of a carpenter was Rs. 3.25 as against 44 nP. in 1924. A statement showing the rural wages in November, 1951 and April, 1953, 1954 and 1955 is given here*:—

Year.	Skilled labour.			Field workers.		
	Carpenter.	Blacksmith.	Cobbler.	Men.	Women.	Children.
1	2	3	4	5	6	7
	Rs. a. p.	Rs. a. p.	Rs. a. p.	Rs. a. p.	Rs. a. p.	Rs. a. p.
1951	3 4 0	3 4 0	2 0 0	1 0 0	0 12 0	0 12 0
1953	2 14 4	2 14 4	2 0 0	1 0 4	0 12 0	0 12 0
1954	2 10 8	2 10 8	2 0 0	0 15 8	0 11 5	0 11 5
1955	2 3 0	2 3 0	1 8 0	0 10 9	0 10 4	0 8 4

Year.	Other agricultural labour.			Herdsmen.		
	Men.	Women.	Children.	Men.	Women.	Children.
1	8	9	10	11	12	13
	Rs. a. p.	Rs. a. p.	Rs. a. p.	Rs. a. p.	Rs. a. p.	Rs. a. p.
1951	1 0 0	0 12 0	0 8 0	..	..	..
1953	1 0 0	0 12 0	.	0 8 0	.	..
1954	0 13 10	0 11 3	0 8 0	0 7 10	.	..
1955	0 10 6	0 10 2	0 10 0	0 6 0	..	..

The figures given in the table are for Bhagalpur district. Though Saharsa district was separated from Bhagalpur district in 1954, the separate figures relating to wages for this district up till 1955 are not available. However, the wages prevailing in Bhagalpur district may be accepted for Saharsa district also.

* *Quarterly Bulletin of Statistics, Bihar*, January, 1952, p. 28 and *Bihar Statistical Hand-Book*, 1955, pages 256—259.

From the above table it appears that the wages have been gradually decreasing. However, we find a marked increase in 1956. This is evident from the following table of rural wages for 1956 and 1957*:—

Nature of job.	Daily wages. 1956.	1957.
	Rs. a. p.	Rs. a. p.
Skilled labourers—		
Carpenter	3 0 0	2.17
Blacksmith	3 0 0	2.17
Cobbler	2 8 0	1.83
Field labourers—		
Men†	0 8 0	1.20
Women	1 4 0	1.17
Children	0 14 0	0.87
Other agricultural labourers—		
Men	1 6 0	1.21
Women	1 3 0	1.06
Children	Not engaged on daily wages.	
Herdsmen—		
Men	0 14 0	1.26
Women	Not engaged	1.17
Children	Not engaged	1.04

To ascertain the current rural wages sample surveys were conducted in 1959, 1960 and 1961 and the data are available in the *Quarterly Bulletins of Statistics* for October 1959, January 1960, July, 1960 and April, 1961, published by the Directorate of Economics and Statistics, Government of Bihar. A statement showing the average current daily rate of agricultural wages in a selected village in Saharsa district is given here*:—

Name of job.	Year. 1959. July to December	1960. April to June.	1961. January to March.
	Rs.	Rs.	Rs.
Skilled labourers—			
Carpenter ..	2.50	2.83	Not available.
Blacksmith ..	2.50	2.83	Ditto.
Cobblers	2.00	2.00	Ditto.

* *Bihar Statistical Hand-Book*, 1957, pages 372—375.

† The wages of men (field labourer) in 1956 seem to be wrong. It should be Rs. 1.50 as the wages for female is Rs. 1.25 in 1956.

** Source of information—(1) *Quarterly Bulletin of Statistics, Bihar*, October, 1959, pages 116—118.

(2) *Quarterly Bulletin of Statistics, Bihar*, January 1960, pages 118—120.

(3) *Quarterly Bulletin of Statistics, Bihar*, July 1960, pages 96—98.

(4) *Quarterly Bulletin of Statistics, Bihar*, April 1961, pages 90—98.

Name of job.	Year. 1959. July to December. Rs.	1960. April to June. Rs.	1961. January to March. Rs.
Field labourers—			
Men	1.50	1.43	1.35
Women	1.50	1.50	1.02
Children	Not available	Not available	1.05
Other Agricultural labourers—			
Men	1.50	1.43	Not available.
Women	1.50	1.43	Ditto.
Children	Not available	Not available	1.05
Herdsmen—			
Men	1.47	Not available	Not available.
Women	1.12	Ditto	Ditto.
Children	0.85	1.00	

The above two tables indicate the following conclusions :—

The daily rate of wages of a skilled labourer (carpenter, blacksmith, and cobblers) showed, on the whole a declining trend in 1957 in comparison with 1956 but again started rising from 1959 which continue till 1960. Later figures are not available. So far field labourers are concerned, the average daily wage rate also showed a very slight declining trend in 1957 but started rising from July, 1959. But this could not continue long and in 1960 and 1961 gradual fall in the wage rate is noticed. The wage level of other agricultural labourers shows a fall in 1957 but in 1959 the wage went up. But again in 1960 it declined. The wages paid to herdsmen show upward movement in 1957 and in 1959.

The level of rural wages discussed so far is also applicable to the urban areas to a very large extent. A separate discussion on the level of urban wages is not needed. On the average it may be said that the wage-level in the urban areas is about 25 per cent higher.

However, there are some particular professions, more or less meant only for the urban areas. For example, motor transport services are mostly concentrated in the urban areas. The monthly wages of a motor driver vary from Rs. 80 to Rs. 100 and above, of

a mechanic, Rs. 100 to Rs. 130 and above, of a cleaner, Rs. 20 to Rs. 35 and of a conductor, Rs. 45 to Rs. 60. The men of the last two categories are also given food-charge at the rate of Rs. 1.50 per day in addition to their basic pay. In Saharsa district due to absence of all weather motorable roads transport services have not developed so much as in other districts of this State.

Rice, flour and oil mills are also generally found in the urban areas. The employees of the mills are generally paid monthly wages. The monthly pay of a manager varies from Rs. 80 to Rs. 120, of a clerk, Rs. 50 to Rs. 75 and of an engine-driver, Rs. 60 to Rs. 100.

A small proportion of the urban population also consists of clerks, teachers, officers, etc., employed in the Government, semi-Government or private offices and other organisations. Though with the rise in the prices of essential commodities their pay has also been considerably raised but not in proportion to the increase in the prices.

STANDARD OF LIVING.

Standard of living is directly concerned with the livelihood pattern, the level of income, consumption preferences, level of prices and various other socio-economic factors. It would be by far the best to look into the standard of living separately for the rural and urban sectors.

In the rural sector the bulk of the people has very small agricultural holdings. A sample survey of one thousand agricultural holdings according to different size was conducted during the census operations of 1951. The results were as follows:—

Distribution of 1,000 agricultural holdings by size of holdings*.

(Based on sample survey of size of holdings, 1952)

Up to 0.5 acre.	Exceeding 0.5 acre and up to 1 acre.	Exceeding 1 acre and up to 2 acres.	Exceeding 2 acres and up to 3 acres.	Exceeding 3 acres and up to 4 acres.	Exceeding 4 acres and up to 5 acres.
1	2	3	4	5	6
326	191	174	70	75	50

Exceeding 5 acres and up to 10 acres.	Exceeding 10 acres and up to 15 acres.	Exceeding 15 acres and up to 30 acres.	Exceeding 30 acres and up to 50 acres.	Exceeding 50 acres.
7	8	9	10	11
57	25	25	7	..

* *District Census Hand Book*, Saharsa, 1951, page 91.

From the perusal of the figures, it is apparent that 32.6 per cent of agricultural holdings in this district are up to 0.5 acre in size and 17.4 per cent falls below 2 acres. Agricultural holdings with a size exceeding 5 acres and more constitute only 11.4 per cent of the total agricultural holdings.

The same ancestral plot goes on being sub-divided through succession and there does not seem to be any abatement in the number of dependents.

As the prices of the essential commodities have gone up at a much higher rate than that of the wages, the labourer feels difficulty in meeting the expenditure of even most necessary commodities. They do not get an uninterrupted employment and have to sit idle for many days in the year. Persons with small holdings particularly if a member of the family has been able to secure some services elsewhere are better than the landless agricultural labourers. If the family is small and there are no litigations and extravagance on social matters, the average family with small holdings over 5 acres and below 15 acres can somehow meet the expenditure and have a few of basic comforts. The middle class agriculturist with a sizeable holding (i.e., above 15 acres up to 30 acres) has an income to assure a fair living but they sometimes get indebted because of small commitments and litigations, etc. Expenditure on the education of children is a heavy drain as the son of an agriculturist normally does not want to be a cultivator only.

The pattern of and preferences for consumption of labourers and small cultivators in a number of villages in Tribeniganj, Pratapganj, Udakishanganj, Kahra and Murliganj Blocks are the same. Their main diet consists of rice, maize, *marua* and *kodo* and cheap vegetables. The expenditure on sugar, spices, fuel and kerosene oil is cut down as much as possible. Fish is cheaper in this district and it forms an item in the diet, particularly in summer when it is the cheapest. Footwear is not common in rural areas. The children are not educated and have to supplement the income of the family by sharing agricultural operations.

The food for the middle class agricultural families consists of rice, wheat, maize, gram, pulses, vegetables, milk and fish. Tea has now percolated in the interior and the consumption of sugar is on increase. Betel (*Pan*) and tobacco-chewing has become common particularly with the Maithil Brahmins.

The large cultivators who number a few have a higher standard of living but they are also sometimes indebted because of the social habits and extravagance.

In the urban areas in Saharsa district the pattern of living is almost the same as in other districts of Bihar. Discussions on this subject in the other revised District Gazetteers broadly apply to this district as well.

The huge expenditure on social commitments swallows a large part of the income. It was found that even a man with an average income of Rs. 300 per month spends near about Rs. 400 in the year over purchase of cloth. On being questioned the head of the family told the investigator that he has to buy a large number of *dhotis* and *saris* every year on the occasion of Durga Puja, Holi, etc. Any death in the joint family means some expenditure. In marriages, etc., the accent is more on expenditure even at the cost of contracting debts. To purchase books and newspapers is one of the least items even in an educated family with an income of Rs. 300 per month.

The standard of living is definitely going up in the urban areas. More of the purchase of consumer goods is an index. Cosmetics, watches, bicycles, scooters, radios, sewing machines, utility furniture, better clothes and shoes, etc., are now to be seen in the families of high, middle and upper classes. Expenditure on such items is not grudged. Food preferences are also undergoing changes in the middle and upper classes particularly in the urban areas.

FAMILY BUDGET.

Family budgets are useful to some extent to appreciate the economic trends. The four family budgets of persons representing different income-groups were studied. In the urban areas, rickshaw-pullers, *darwans, chowkidars,* office peons and hawkers come under the low income-group with an income of Rs. 115 or below per month. The family budget of a rickshaw-puller which represents the low income-group was studied. The family has five units consisting of one adult male, two adult females and four children aged about 4, 6, 8 and 10 years. Both the husband and the wife are earning members. The wife works as a part-time maid-servant and gets about Rs. 25 per month. On the average the rickshaw-puller earns Rs. 3 a day. The total income therefore comes to Rs. 115 out of which the owner of the rickshaw has to be paid Rs. 30 per month. The items of monthly expenditure were found to be as follows:—

		Rs.
(1)	Rickshaw-rent	30.00
(2)	Rice	23.50
(3)	Flour	10.00
(4)	Pulse	5.00
(5)	Mustard oil	4.50
(6)	Vegetables	5.00
(7)	Medicine	2.00
(8)	Entertainment (mostly in visiting cinema)	5.00
(9)	Clothing	10.00
(10)	Spices	2.00

(11) Fuel	.. .. ..	5.00
(12) Kerosene oil	.. .. ..	1.00
(13) House rent	.. .. ..	5.00
(14) Intoxication and tea, *biri*, *pan*, etc.	..	20.00
(15) Miscellaneous	.. .. ..	2.00
(16) Fish or meat	.. .. ..	2.00
TOTAL	..	132.00

The budget shows a deficit of Rs. 17.00. It is peculiar that a rickshaw-puller will have an entertainment expenditure of Rs. 5 per month. It was ascertained that the rickshaw-pullers are very keen about seeing cinemas. There is no expenditure on fruits, education or domestic services. Usually the rickshaw-puller gets into some debts if he has the vice of drinking. The expenditure on intoxication seems too much for a person of such poor income.

The family budget of a teacher with an income between Rs. 115 to Rs. 250 showed an expenditure of Rs 165 per month. The teacher, however, would occasionally take up private coaching and try to supplement his income.

The budget of the teacher was found to be at par with that of office-assistants whose monthly income is about Rs. 150

The income of the middle class people varies from Rs. 250 to Rs. 600 per month. Provincial gazetted officers, engineers, professors, lawyers, headmasters of high or multi-purpose schools and middle class cultivators constitute the major portion of this income-group In this connection the family budget of a Provincial gazetted officer was studied.

The family of the officer consists of husband, wife, three children aged about 3, 5 and 7 years, three adult dependents and one servant. The entire unit of the family comes to 7½.

The family budget consists of the following items of expenditure:—

		Rs.
(1) Rice (only transport cost from village)	..	5
(2) Wheat	.. ..	20
(3) Vegetables	.. .. ..	15
(4) Mustard oil	.. .. ..	12
(5) Spices	.. ..	4
(6) Milk	.. ..	20
(7) Sugar	.. ..	8

	Rs.
(8) Fish or meat	10
(9) Tea	5
(10) Coal	12
(11) Electric charges	10
(12) Clothes	30
(13) Medicine	10
(14) Education	20
(15) Transport	10
(16) Entertainment	10
(17) House rent	42
(18) *Pan* (betel) and cigarette	10
(19) Dhobi and barber	10
(20) Cosmetics	10
(21) Miscellaneous	20
(22) Life Insurance	40
(23) Provident Fund	100
(24) Salary of the servant	10
TOTAL ..	443

The expenditure on pulse and *ghee* has not been shown as they are brought from home. The total monthly income of the officer is Rs. 495 and so the budget shows a net saving of Rs. 52 per month. Moreover, a sum of Rs. 140 which is deposited in the Life Insurance and in the Provident Fund also indirectly adds to the monthly saving and thus the real monthly saving comes to Rs. 192.

Under the fourth category comes the big cultivators and highly paid officers whose income exceeds Rs. 600 per month. The family budget of a highly placed personnel in the educational institution was studied. His monthly income is near about Rs. 1,300. His family consists of 10 units excluding two adult sons who are reading in the Birla Institute of Technology, Ranchi.

The items of his monthly expenditure are as follows:—

	Rs.
(1) Rice	60
(2) Wheat	40
(3) Pulse	15
(4) Spices	10
(5) Mustard oil	20
(6) Ghee	25

		Rs.
(7)	Milk	30
(8)	Fish or meat	15
(9)	Vegetables	60
(10)	Tea and coffee	20
(11)	Sugar	20
(12)	Education (on two sons who are reading in Birla Institute of Technology, Ranchi).	350
(13)	Medicine	15
(14)	Transport (including petrol for jeep and railway fare).	100
(15)	Clothes	100
(16)	House rent	Free.
(17)	Festivals	25
(18)	*Pan, bidi* and cigarette	10
(19)	*Dhobi* and barber	15
(20)	Salary of the servant, driver and tutor ..	75
(21)	Miscellaneous	50
(22)	Life Insurance	75
(23)	Provident Fund	100
(24)	Postal savings	10
(25)	Entertainment to guests (tea party) ..	25
	TOTAL ..	1,265

The net monthly saving comes to Rs. 35 only but the real saving amounts to Rs. 210 including the deposit of Rs. 100 in the Provident Fund and Rs. 75 in the Life Insurance Corporation.

ECONOMIC INCIDENCE OF THE PANDAS OF SINGHESHWARSTHAN.

A particular section following the profession of priesthood was studied. There are only 14 Panda families at Singheshwarsthan with a total population of 208 persons. All the families are carrying on their traditional profession of priesthood and agriculture. They do not prefer to take up other occupations.

Every family has got a share in the offerings presented to the deity. The share has been fixed conventionally and it varies with individual family. The temple is run under a Committee which is controlled by the Bihar State Board of Religious Trusts, Patna. All the offerings presented to the deity are deposited in a box which is

opened by the manager of the Singheshwar Trust Committee in the presence of all the share-holders. After keeping apart the amount spent over the maintenance of the temple and other items of expenditure such as performance of *puja*, etc., the balance is divided. Two-thirds of the amount goes to the Pandas while one-third is deposited in the Trust Committee as reserve fund.

On the average a family of the Pandas gets about Rs. 100 from his share in the offerings and Rs. 100 from the pilgrims for the personal services. These personal services include looking after the pilgrims and showing them round. Thus the total monthly income from the temple comes to Rs. 200 per family.

The next source of income of the Pandas is their own cultivation. The land, they possess, is generally fertile due to the deposit of silt by the Kosi river during its flood period. The minimum yield per bigha is calculated to be five maunds of grain. Taking the average price of one maund to be Rs. 15, the total price of the produce comes to Rs. 75. But about Rs. 15 is spent over agricultural expenses and hence the real income from one bigha of land comes to Rs. 65 per annum.

The fourteen Panda families may be divided into three economic groups from the income point of view, viz., low, middle and upper. Out of the 14 families, four families which possess land between 50 to 100 bighas may be placed in the upper income-group, four families possessing land between 35 to 15 bighas in the middle income-group and the other six families with land below 15 bighas to 5 bighas in the low income-group.

The family in the low income-group on the average possesses 9 bighas of land. On the basis of the income per bigha as calculated earlier, the average family of this group gets Rs. 45 per month from cultivation. The income from the temple is about Rs. 200. Thus the total income both from the temple and the land comes to about Rs. 245 per month. The average family of this income-group consists of three males (adult), three females (adult) and five children. The entire unit comes to $8\frac{1}{2}$. The items of expenditure of the family under this income-group are as follows:—

	Rs.
(1) Food	150
(2) Spices	4
(3) Oil	8
(4) Fuel	8
(5) Vegetables	10
(6) Medicine	10
(7) Transport	15

	Rs.
(8) Social and religious obligations (*Upanayan*, marriage, festivals, etc.).	35
(9) Clothing	35
(10) Miscellaneous including *bidi*, *khaini* and *pan*	25
(11) Land revenue	2
TOTAL ..	302

The family budget of Rs. 302 as against the monthly income of Rs. 245 shows a deficit of Rs. 57. The Pandas under this group generally take loan for meeting the expenditure to be incurred on performing social and religious obligations. The field investigation shows that the incidence of debt is common in the families under this income-group.

They borrow interest-free money from the Singheswar Trust Committee on the security of their share in the temple. A sum of Rs. 2,000 has been advanced to the Pandas as loan during 1961-62 by the said Committee.

The total landed property belonging to the families of middle income-group is 90 bighas. The average family under this income-group possesses 22.5 bighas of land. The total monthly income from cultivation is calculated to be Rs. 112.50 per family from cultivation. The income from the temple is about Rs. 200. Thus the total income of the family both from the temple and the land comes to Rs. 312.50 per month. The average family consists of 18 members, i.e., 5 males (adult), 5 females (adult) and 8 children. The entire unit comes to 14 The items of monthly expenditure of the family under this income-group are as follows:—

	Rs.
(1) Food	200
(2) Spices	5
(3) Oil	10
(4) Fuel	4
(5) Vegetables	10
(6) Education	10
(7) Medicine	10
(8) Transport	15
(9) Social and religious obligations	35
(10) Clothing	35
(11) Miscellaneous	25
(12) Land revenue	5
TOTAL ..	364

The total expenditure of Rs. 364 as against the income of Rs. 312.50 shows a deficit of Rs. 51.50 per month. The families take loan only on the occasion of marriage or *Upanayan* (sacred thread-wearing ceremony), etc., which involves heavy expenditure. However, the incidence of indebtedness in the middle income-group is less than that of the low income-group. The expenditure on fuel in this group is less than that of the low income-group. The reason is that as the families under this group possess more lands, they get fuel from their fields to a larger extent and hence they have to spend less for purchasing the same. Any expenditure on servants has not been taken into consideration. The expenses on this account, if incurred, are small.

Under the upper income-group there are four Panda families and the total land, they possess, is about 292 bighas. Thus the average family possesses about 73 bighas of land and its monthly income from cultivation comes to Rs. 365. The minimum income from the temple may be taken as Rs. 200. Thus the total income both from the temple and the land amounts to Rs. 565 per month. But this amount may be taken as the minimum. The real income of the family may be higher as the families under this group have greater percentage of share in the temple and hence their income from the temple is higher than that of the families under the low and middle income-groups. The average number of members in the family of the upper income-group comes to about 17, i.e., 5 males (adult), 4 females (adult) and 8 children. The entire unit comes to 13. The items of average monthly expenditure of the families under this income-group are as follows:—

	Rs.
(1) Food	200
(2) Spices	5
(3) Oil	10
(4) Fuel	4
(5) Vegetable	10
(6) Education	15
(7) Medicine	10
(8) Transport	25
(9) Social and religious obligations	40
(10) Clothing	40
(11) Miscellaneous	25
(12) Land revenue	15
TOTAL ..	399

The monthly budget of Rs. 399 as against an income of Rs. 565 per month shows a saving of Rs. 166. The saving is understood to be invested in purchasing lands and also in advancing loans to the needy Pandas. Some of the Pandas of this group deposit nearly 50 per cent of the savings in the postal savings banks. The families of this income-group have also *pucca* houses. The families of the low and middle income-groups do not possess such houses.

The expenditure on milk and *ghee* has not been shown in any of the budgets as the Pandas irrespective of economic groups, generally rear miltch cattle (i.e., cows and she-buffaloes). From them they get milk and prepare milk-products.

From the family budgets of the different income-groups it appears that the economic condition of the persons under low and middle income-groups which constitute 71.6 percentage is not good.

The average number of members in a Panda family is about 15 which leads one to think that there is excessive population growth. The large size of the Panda family is also one of the reasons of their poor economic condition. If family planning, which they do not like, is not adopted their present economic position will further deteriorate.

Moreover, their absolute dependence on the land and the temple for their livelihood is also a hurdle. In view of the small holdings which the majority of the families possess and a large number of members in their families it is but essential to get some members engaged in other occupations. The educational backwardness is also a factor for their poor condition. The field investigation shows that none of the Panda families has produced so far a school teacher, a lawyer or a doctor. Thus the Pandas here may be said to have been caught in a whirlpool created by themselves and unless they assert themselves and get out of the whirlpool, their future is definitely dark.

Unlike the Pandas of Baidyanathdham or Varanasi, the Pandas of Singheshwar have no houses to be rented to the pilgrims and as such they do not normally offer the facility of lodging to the pilgrims. The flow of pilgrims cannot be as high as that of at Baidyanathdham (Deoghar) or Varanasi partly because of bad communications in the district and partly due to the fact that the temple at Singheshwar is not so famous as that of Deoghar and Varanasi.

Singheshwarsthan, a famous religious place, has no railway connection. But the place is linked with Madhepura—its sub-divisional town—by a metalled road. Madhepura is connected by railway with Saharsa, the district headquarters, and also with Bihariganj, a trade centre in the district *via* Banmankhi. The bus services for Singheshwar are available at Madhepura throughout the year. Moreover, rickshaws are always available at Madhepura to take the pilgrims to this place.

LEVEL OF EMPLOYMENT.

The total number of employable persons in the district is not available and as such it is not possible to gauge the extent of employment or unemployment. However the *District Census Hand-Book of Saharsa,* 1951 gives figures relating to persons (with their dependents) deriving their livelihood from agricultural and non-agricultural occupations. This gives some help.

As mentioned earlier 93.55 percentage of the total population of the district is dependent on agriculture and 6.45 percentage on other pursuits. As the agricultural operations, in which labour is engaged, last nearly for five or six months in a year, it can be said that the agricultural labour remains practically unemployed for about half of the year. The employment in agricultural operations is purely seasonal. The incidence of employment in agricultural operations also varies and depends on the condition of the crops and other factors. During the years of Kosi floods when crops were destroyed, there was acute problem of unemployment for agricultural labourers. But with the completion of Kosi barrage and embankments now the area is generally saved from flood, but due to absence of irrigation the cultivation depends on rain which is uncertain, and with this the employment of agricultural labour is also uncertain.

According to 1951 census only 6.45 percentage of the total population depends on other non-agricultural occupations. Their fate is more secure and they are employed mostly for the whole year. The number of persons engaged in different non-agricultural pursuits according to 1951 census is given*:—

Nature of employment.	Number of persons.
All. industries and services	21,052
(*a*) Primary Industries not elsewhere specified	2,179
(*b*) Mining and quarrying	16
(*c*) Processing and manufacturing foodstuffs, textiles, leather and products thereof.	1,172
(*d*) Processing and manufacturing metals, chemicals and products thereof.	471
(*e*) Processing and manufacturing not elsewhere specified.	503
(*f*) Construction and utilities	3,485
(*g*) Commerce	8,750
(*h*) Transport, storage and communication ..	560
(*i*) Health, Education and Public Adminis-tration.	1,755
(*j*) Services not elsewhere specified ..	2,161

* *District Census Hand-Book of Saharsa,* 1951, pages 26—42.

The small percentage (i.e., 6.45 per cent) and the break-up figures of the persons employed in non-agricultural pursuits show the very backward position of the district from industrial point of view.

With the creation of Saharsa district in 1954 a number of offices had to be opened. Moreover, with the expansion of certain small-scale industries under the National Extension Service and with the sponsoring of the programme of rural economic uplift, a greater number of persons have been employed. A large number of Government offices and residential buildings were and are still being built in which the local urban labour has had been engaged. The execution of the Kosi Project schemes also provided employment not only to the people of this district but also to a large number of technical and non-technical hands of other districts.

But with the completion of Kosi embankments and barrage and also many buildings, the demand for local labour is on the decline. In the decade (i.e., 1951–61) that followed, there could not have been any substantial shift of the trends although the number of persons employed might have slightly gone up. Saharsa has still no place in the industrial picture of Bihar. But the district appears to have some potential for the development of paper, sugar and jute industries. If these industries could be developed, the unemployment problem will be partially solved. But with the poor communication system it will be a long way before the district could be even partially industrialised.

EMPLOYMENT EXCHANGE.

The following figures furnished by the Saharsa Employment Exchange office show the total number of persons registered, vacancies notified and the persons placed in employment from 1956 to 1962:—

Year.	Total number of persons registered during the year.	Total number of vacancies notified.	Total number of persons placed in employment.
1956 ..	1,629	391	127
1957 ..	600	75	29
1958 ..	567	183	14
1959 ..	996	168	36
1960 .	1,803	387	49
1961 ..	1,544	312	119
1962 ..	4,588	1,675	369

The table shows that the number of persons registered has been fluctuating. However, for the last three years the number has swelled up considerably. The probable reason is that Saharsa is a new developing district and its population has increased largely. Moreover, the number of persons passing secondary or higher secondary and university examinations and thereafter seeking jobs has also been increasing every year. The number of persons seeking technical jobs is a few only. In view of the large number of job-seekers registered in the District Employment Exchange, the number of persons placed in employment is not encouraging.

District Employment Exchange, Saharsa supplied the following figures with regard to the persons employed in the public sector from 30th September 1958 to 31st March 1963:—

Date.			Average number of persons employed in the public sector.
30th September, 1958	..	..	11,358
31st December, 1958	..	..	10,896
31st March, 1959	..	..	10,716
30th June, 1959	..	..	12,626
30th September, 1959	..	..	13,052
31st December, 1959	..	..	13,973
31st March, 1960	..	..	16,967
30th June, 1960	..	..	14,462
30th September, 1960	..	..	15,383
31st December, 1960	..	..	15,905
31st March, 1961	..	..	16,343
30th June, 1961	..	..	15,529
30th September, 1961	..	..	16,451
31st December, 1961	..	..	17,186
31st March, 1962	..	..	16,465
30th June, 1962	..	..	15,404
30th September, 1962	..	..	15,402
31st December, 1962	..	..	13,877
31st March, 1963	..	..	14,461

The persons employed in the public sector include the employees of Central Government, Quasi-Central Government, State Government and Local Bodies.

The perusal of the foregoing table clearly shows that the figures have been fluctuating. The reasons are:—

(*i*) Recruitment and retrenchment of workers engaged in construction of Kosi embankments at Birpur, Nirmali, Supaul, Murliganj and other places; and

(*ii*) Recruitment and retrenchment of the seasonal workers under Anti-Malaria Department.

The District Employment Exchange has not yet been able to do much work. The placement brought about through this agency is poor. There is more of a craze to get into clerical jobs than in technical jobs. The agency is not resorted to in many cases by the employer.

NATIONAL PLANNING AND COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT.

For an all-round development of rural economy, the work on Community Development Projects was started after the independence of the country. The Community Development Projects try to give effect to an intensive and comprehensive programme covering all the aspects of rural life, e.g., agriculture, rural cottage type industries, education, housing, health, recreation, etc., and aim at utilising under a democratic set up the surplus labour force in the rural areas for developmental purpose.

Following are the details of Community Development Blocks in the district as supplied by the Development section of the Collectorate at Saharsa:—

Serial no.	Name of Community Development Block.	Name of Block headquarters.	Subdivision.	Date and year of starting.
1	Kahra—Stage II ..	Kahra .	Sadar ..	1st June 1954.
2	Kishanganj—Stage II	Kishanganj ..	Madhepura ..	1st April 1955.
3	Raghopur—Stage II	Raghopur ..	Supaul ..	1st April 1955.
4	Murliganj—Stage II	Murliganj ..	Madhepura ..	14th October 1955.
5	Tribeniganj—Stage II	Tribeniganj ..	Supaul ..	1st October 1956.
6	Chhatapur—Stage II	Chhattapur ..	Supaul ..	1st April 1956.
7	Sourbazar—Stage II	Sourbazar ..	Sadar ..	26th January 1957.
8	Alamnagar—Stage II	Alamnagar ..	Madhepura ..	1st April 1957.
9	Sonbarsa—Stage II ..	Sonbarsa ..	Sadar ..	1st April 1958.
10	Basantpur—Stage I ..	Basantpur ..	Supaul ..	2nd October 1957.
11	Chousa—Stage I ..	Chousa ..	Madhepura ..	1st April 1959.
12	Kumarkhand—Stage I	Kumarkhand	Madhepura ..	1st October 1958.
13	Singheshwar—Stage I	Singheshwar ..	Madhepura ..	1st April 1959.
14	Pipra—Stage I ..	Pipra ..	Supaul ..	1st April 1961.
15	Madhepura—Stage I	Madhepura ..	Madhepura ..	1st October 1961.
16	Supaul ..	Supaul ..	Supaul ..	1st April 1962.
17	Dharhara ..	Nowhatta ..	Sadar ..	1st October 1962.
18	Kisanpur—Stage I ..	Kisanpur ..	Supaul ..	1st October 1962.
		Pre-extension Block.		
19	Marauna ..	Nirmali ..	Supaul ..	1st April 1962.
20	Mahisi ..	Bangaon ..	Sadar ..	1st April 1962.
21	Nirmali ..	Nirmali ..	Supaul ..	1st October 1962.

The table below was supplied by the Development Section, Saharsa and will give the details regarding achievements of Community Development Programme and National Extension Service (Blockwise) for the last ten years:—

Item.	Names of the Blocks.									
	Kahra.	Kishanganj.	Raghopur.	Murliganj.	Tribeniganj.	Chhattapur.	Sourbazar.	Alamnagar.	Basantpur.	Sonbarsa.
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11
1. Distribution of improved seeds (mds.).	10.747.37	6,860	12,342	10,342	13,309	11,201	15,529	17,342	15,431	12,432
2. Distribution of chemical fertilisers (mds.).	1,710.5	1,036	1,108	1,403	1.708	1.215	1,731	1,445	1,132	1,041
3. Number of compost pits ..	10,761	5.474	14.241	5,152	10,912	8,577	5,604	3,380	8,254	8,502
4. Use of green manures (acres)	5,071.8	2,846	1,298	1,406	2,147	2,413	10,467	10,438	8,312	5,365
5. Cultivation by Japanese method (acres).	1,301	821	2,375	2,076	1,900	2,299	5,053	2,588	2,710	2,952
6. Number of village level workers	31	28	26	22	24	20	28	13	15	20
7. Number of seed multiplication fodder.	1	Nil	Nil	Nil	Nil	1	1	1	1	1
8. Pucca wells constructed (no.)	53	37	41	82	52	31	31	29	23	27
9. Kutcha wells constructed (no.)	47	39	17	21	14	11	13	9	11	9
10. Medium Irrigation Schemes completed.	Nil	Nil	1	Nil	Nil	1	Nil	Nil	Nil	Nil
11. Small-scale Irrigation Schemes completed.	29	17	26	10	13	46	10	5	32	Nil
12. Number of schools opened	80	107	91	81	104	69	104	58	47	83
13. Artificial insemination centres and sub-centres.	Nil	1	4	Nil	Nil	1	2	Nil	15	1
14. Number of co-operative societies.	47	31	45	43	44	44	49	34	28	49
15. Number of development works including Youth Clubs, library, etc., undertaken by Gram Panchayats.	185	112	89	79	83	63	71	81	69	53

Item.	Names of the Bloks.										
	Chousa.	Kumar-khand.	Singhesh-war.	Pipra.	Madhe-pura.	Supaul.	Dhar hara.	Kisan-pur.	Marauna.	Mahisi.	Nirmali.
1	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20	21	22
1. Distribution of improved seeds (mds.).	2,644	1,905	1,346	9,818	2,312	2,149	1,843	1,432	1,369	1,129	Not available.
2. Distribution of chemical fertilisers (mds.).	1,146	1,213	1,012	1,032	831	931	842	981	1,082	731	
3. Number of compost pits ..	4,818	3,731	3,643	2,244	2,232	1,797	1,783	2,190	2,149	1,412	
4. Use of green manures (acres)	471	2,495	6,440	1,188	N. A.*	1,600	4,029	1,214	1,142	943	
5. Cultivation by Japanese method (acres).	2,358	1,196	790	987	1,291	405	1,941	1,164	1,235	1,346	
6. Number of village level workers	15	21	29	17	24	21	12	19	38	4	
7. Number of seed multiplication fodder.	Nil	1	Nil	1	2	Nil	1	1	1	1	
8. Pucca wells constructed (no.)	19	34	52	26	28	22	19	17	21	19	
9. Kutcha wells constructed (no.)	7	11	13	9	7	9	7	6	9	6	
10. Medium Irrigation Schemes completed.	Nil	1	1	Nil	Nil	Nil	1	Nil	Nil	Nil	
11. Small-scale Irrigation Schemes completed.	Nil	9	Nil	Nil	Nil	Nil	7	Nil	Nil	Nil	
12. Number of schools opened	111	74	99	70	93	119	67	79	69	59	
13. Artificial insemination centres and sub-centres.	1	Nil	1	1	Nil	1	Nil	1	Nil	1	
14. Number of co-operative societies.	18	34	47	40	61	71	32	38	32	19	
15. Number of development works including Youth Clubs, library, etc., undertaken by Gram Panchayats.	67	71	81	47	63	71	77	59	48	58	

*Not available.

The table below was supplied by the Development Section, Saharsa and will show the expenditure incurred in Development Programme in Saharsa district during 1962-63 and 1963-64 (August, 1963):—

[Ceiling in lakhs.]

Serial no.	Items.	Scheme in Stage II.	Scheme in Stage I.	Allotment in rupees. 1962-63.	Allotment in rupees. 1963-64.	Expenditure in rupees. 1962-63.	Expenditure in rupees. 1963-64.
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
1	Block headquarters	41.20	47.50	9,04,800	8,27,093	9,00,138	2,57,172
2	Animal Husbandry and Agriculture.	12.00	13.00	1,12,800	98,532	87,370	53,254
3	Irrigation ..	44.20	51.00	2,71,500	2,59,700	75,869	41,805
4	Health and Rural Sanitation.	15.80	18.00	1,38,500	1,15,700	74,622	36,354
5	Education ..	9.20	10.40	79,500	13,133	20,960	9,578
6	Social Education	10.40	11.80	79,000	28,746	33,754	24,630
7	Communications	12.50	14.20	1,19,400	20,619	27,204	14,347
8	Industries ..	9.80	11.10	97,000	37,706	76,151	47,207
9	Housing for staff	13.20	15.20	62,000	59,373	58.503	21,301

ORGANISATIONAL PATTERN.

The Community Development Programme conforms to the all-India Pattern as adopted in the State of Bihar under the Department of Community Development, now changed to Community Development and Panchayati Raj. The Development Commissioner of the State is the Co-ordinator at State level. At the Divisional level, the Commissioner and at the District level, the District Magistrate are the co-ordinators. The District Magistrate has been vested with the powers of "Head of Department" over the finances and a large part of the administration of the Blocks except for disciplinary action over the staff not appointed by him. He is assisted in the work of co-ordination by the District Development Committee and the District Co-ordination Committee of which he is the Chairman and District Development Officer its Secretary. The District Development Committee consists of the District Magistrate, members of the State Assembly and Councils and members of Parliament representing the District population, 6 non-officials prominent in social work and 3 Subdivisional Officers of the district and all

district technical heads of the Development departments. The District Co-ordination Committee consists of the same membership as the District Development Committee minus the members of State Legislature, Parliament and non-officials and with the addition of all the Block Development Officers. The District Development Committee reviews every quarter the progress in the development block as also on all matters of development concerning the district specially with a view to assess and enthuse public participations and public co-operations. The District Co-ordination Committee reviews and clears up the administrative bottle-necks. The District Magistrate further exercises administrative control over the activities and the staff of all development departments in the district including those in the subdivision and blocks. At the Block level the Block Development Officer is the co-ordinator of the development programme though also he looks after the Revenue works in his area. He is assisted by a Block Development Committee consisting of all the Mukhiyas of the Gram Panchayats in the Block and some prominent non-officials consisting of progressive farmers, selected Secretaries of the Co-operative Societies and other social workers. The technical officers of development departments are *ex-officio* members of this Committee. The District Magistrate is the Chairman of the Committee and the Block Development Officer its Secretary.

The Block team of staff consists of the Block Development Officer, who is an officer drawn from the Bihar Civil Service executive branch or Bihar Junior Civil Service and supervisors and other staff provided by Agriculture, Animal Husbandry, Education. Co-operative, Industries, Panchayats, Statistics, Medical and Public Health Departments of the State.

Block Development Committee with its five sub-committees on Finance, Agriculture, Irrigation, Education, and Works reviews and supervises the development work at the Block level and is specially responsible for obtaining public co-operation and public participation.

Drastic changes are shortly going to be introduced in a couple of years in this district as in the other parts of State for de-centralising administrative authority under the newly introduced legislation named "Panchayati Raj Act".

This law envisages transfer of administrative authority from officials to the representatives of the people elected through the Panchayats.

IMPACT OF COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT BLOCK IN SAHARSA DISTRICT.

The Community Development Project represents an integrated approach to the problem of rural uplift and development centred round agricultural production which in view of the importance of food in the country's economy, has necessarily to be in the forefront.

Its basic aim is to affect material, social and psychological improvement of the rural population, and the improvement of their technique in the matter of agricultural and industrial production. It seeks to provide such means, facilities and agencies as would create an environment in which the villager is able and willing to improve his lot by utilising the fruits of research and modern technical aids in the spheres of better agriculture, animal husbandry and health, broaden his mental horizon through increased opportunities for basic and social education, improve the social and economic life in the village by building up co-operative institutions, whether as multi-purpose societies or *Gram Panchayats*, which would help to stimulate cultural, social and educational activities.

The Community Development Programme was started in Saharsa district in 1954. Since then the programme has steadily expanded and twenty-one blocks have been established so far.

An investigation was made by the investigators in August, 1963 to make an intensive study on the impact of Community Development. For this, eight villages, namely, Kahra, Sulindabad, Agwanpur and Nariar under the Kahra Development Block with headquarters at Kahra and Ratanpatti, Rampur, Parwa and Birgaon under the Murliganj Development Block with headquarters at Murliganj were studied.

Kahra and Murliganj Blocks were started in 1954 and 1955 respectively. They cover an area of 77,763 acres and 66,770 acres with 77 and 82 villages and 31 and 42 *Gram Panchayats* respectively. According to the statistics supplied by Block office the total population of the Blocks is 1,03,497 and 97,308 persons, i.e., 52,474 and 50,320 males and 51,023 and 46,988 females respectively. A few words regarding background of the eight villages where investigation was taken up will be useful:—

(*a*) *Village Kahra*.—The village is situated at a distance of about four miles south from Saharsa town. It has an area of 1,281.61 acres with 311 households and the total population is 2,308 souls, i.e., 1,199 males and 1,109 females, according to figures supplied by Block office. The total number of literates is 566, i.e., 435 males and 131 females. It has a village road on which bullock-cart can ply.

(*b*) *Village Sulindabad*.—It is situated at a distance of about two miles south from Kahra, the Block headquarters, and about seven miles to the south from Saharsa, the district headquarters. It has an area of 2,221.00 acres and 557 households with a population of 4,228 souls, i.e., 2,117 males and 2,111 females, according to the figures supplied by the Block office. The total number of literates is 537, i.e., 435 males and 102

females. It has a village road and people can reach the village by bullock-cart only.

(c) *Village Nariar.*—This village is situated at a distance of about four miles from Kahra, the Block headquarters and five miles towards north of Saharsa, the district headquarters. It has an area of 2,009.41 acres. It has 877 households and a total population of 5,227 persons, i.e., 2,714 males and 2,513 females according to the figures supplied by the Block office. The total number of literates is 514, i.e., 481 males and 33 females. The village is connected by a *kutcha* road.

(d) *Village Agwanpur.*—Situated at a distance of about six miles north from Kahra, the Block headquarters, this village has an area of 411.68 acres It has 88 households and a total population of 777 persons, i.e., 402 males and 375 females, according to the figures of the Block office. The total number of literates is 68, i.e., 61 males and 7 females. The village is connected by a *kutcha* road.

(e) *Village Rampur.*—It is situated at a distance of about eight miles west of Murliganj, the Block headquarters. The area is 2,644 acres and there are 547 households. The total population according to the figures of the Block office is 3,214, i.e., 1,698 males and 1,516 females and the total number of literates is 484, i.e.. 443 males and 41 females. The village is connected only by a *kutcha* road and one has to cross the Balua river to reach the village.

(f) *Village Parwa.*—It is situated at a distance of about nine miles west of Murliganj, the Block headquarters. It has an area of 1,519 acres and has 393 households. The total population according to the figures supplied by the Block office is 2,426, i.e., 1,322 males and 1,104 females and the total number of literates is 255, i.e., 233 males and 22 females. The village is connected by a *kutcha* road.

(g) *Village Ratanpatti.*—Situated at a distance of about eight miles towards south-west from Murliganj, the Block headquarters, this village has an area of 3,700 acres and has 1,128 households. The total population according to the figures supplied by the Block office is 6,461 persons, i.e., 3,481 males and 2,980 females and the total number of literates is 809 persons, i.e., 723 males and 86 females. The village is connected by a *kutcha* road.

(*h*) *Village Birgaon.*—This village is situated at a distance of about twelve miles towards south-west of Murliganj, the Block headquarters. It has an area of 1,041 acres and has 264 households. The total population according to the 1961 census is 1,466, i.e., 837 males and 629 females and the total number of literates is 84 persons, i.e., 71 males and 13 females. The village is connected by a *kutcha* road.

It is to be noted that the villages studied had remarkably bad communications and their agricultural economy is much affected by bad communications. The impact on the different sections as found is indicated below:—

Agriculture.—It was ascertained that only 489 families out of 4,183 families had been covered by the Community Development authorities for better cultivation. The soil is sandy and the facility for irrigation is meagre. Paddy, jute, maize and *marua* are the principal crops. The Murliganj and Kahra Blocks have introduced improved seeds, better type manure, etc., to bring about a better cultivation.

In 1962-63, the Community Development Blocks sold the following quantity of improved seeds:—

Fourteen maunds to village Kahra for about 445 acres of land, twenty-eight maunds to village Sulindabad for about 715 acres of land, thirty-four maunds to village Nariar for about 742 acres of land, thirty maunds to village Agwanpur for about 181 acres of land, ten maunds to village Birgaon for about 341 acres of land, nine maunds to village Parwa for about 279 acres of land, sixteen maunds to village Rampur for about 543 acres of land and twelve maunds to village Ratanpatti for about 489 acres of land.

Very little of improved type of crops or rice cultivated by the households were, however, seen. It was gathered that the villagers ate up the seed-grains. The seed supplied was also not adequate even for agricultural purposes in villages Rampur, Parwa and Ratanpatti. Further it was ascertained that in general the villagers had a complaint that every year some influential persons were given more of improved seeds which were not properly utilised by them. It was also complained that there has been delay in the distribution of improved seeds and the seeds are supplied only when the sowing time is over. Thirdly, during 1961-62, the villagers were given improved seed without germinations which gave just the opposite result and hence, the villagers now show apathy towards utilising the improved seeds.

The following quantity of manure was sold:—

Manures.—8.5 maunds to village Kahra, 9 maunds to village Sulindabad, 12 maunds to village Nariar, 15 maunds to village Agwanpur, 7 maunds to village Ratanpatti, 18 maunds to village Rampur, 10 maunds to village Birgaon and 17 maunds to village Parwa.

The quantity distributed was quite inadequate. When questions were put by the investigators to the villagers of all the eight villages regarding the impact of manures and poor response in using the manures, they replied that everything depended on timely and adequate rainfall. The villagers think that the fertilisers alone without ample irrigation will render their lands unfertile. The investigators personally saw many maunds of chemical manures lying in the stock because of poor response. On enquiry from the Block Development Officers of both Murliganj and Kahra Blocks, it was also ascertained that the officers were facing great difficulty in disposing of the chemical fertilisers.

Japanese Method of Cultivation of Paddy.

The attempts of the Community Development Blocks to introduce the Japanese method of paddy cultivation have not been successful because of the nature of the soil and want of irrigation. The area is not suitable for this type of cultivation, without proper irrigation. Attempts to sink wells have proved unsuccessful and the people have no money to make their own arrangement for irrigation.

General.

The incidence of indebtedness is high and the investigators found that practically 75 per cent or even more of the villagers are indebted.

The Community Development Block has not been of much help to liquidate the indebtedness. The income of many of the villages is mostly swallowed up in payment of the interests for the loans.

As regards financial aid from the Community Development Block, it may be noted that no industrial loan was given in the villages studied. Only a sum of Rs. 1,789 was given to village Rampur in Murliganj Development Block in 1962 under Agricultural Loans Act. Besides, some grant has been given by the Co-operative Societies.

There has been provision by the State Government in Saharsa district to dig out jute-retting tanks in the villages because jute is also one of the main cash crops in the district. It was gathered from the papers of Murliganj Block office that three jute-retting tanks had been dug out at the village Rampur, and two at village Parwa and paid for. The system is that the villagers have to pay

50 per cent of the total cost of the tank. On visiting the villages, it was found that there were no jute-retting tanks at all in these villages.

The investigator has also visited many villages in Pratapganj, Tribeniganj and Udakishanganj Blocks and it was gathered that jute-retting tanks in these areas were not always dug out although paid for. The villagers think that the jute-retting tanks exist more on paper only. The attitude was rather depressing as to the success of Government efforts.

The villagers are also responsible for much of the poor response of any development in the rural areas, because they have mistaken the Block to be an agency for only distributing money. As for their attitude towards these programmes and their resistance to change, during the nine years that the Block has been functioning, only 20 per cent of the population have accepted any change. With the coming of the Block in Stage II, funds are not so abundantly available for granting subsidies, the people did not develop much of social consciousness or initiative and did not think it was necessary for them individually and collectively to continue the work that has been sponsored.

One of the basic ideas of Community Development Project was that, spoon feeding will be done at the initial stage and will gradually be diminished when the people will start taking up the work themselves. This objective has not been fulfilled. The villagers still think that, if a bore-hole latrine is filled up or choked up, it is none of their duty along with others to bring it back functioning but that it was the duty of the Block authorities to keep it going.

Animal Husbandry.

Poultry farming is generally carried on by the Tribals and Muslims who form a very low percentage in the district. However. the Community Development Block began supplying the other people in the villages with improved type of birds and eggs. Of the villages visited by the investigator, Kahra was supplied with five eggs of improved type in 1962-63 to one person, Sulindabad with two birds of improved type in 1958 to two persons, Agwanpur with 8 birds and 12 eggs of improved type to seven persons, Birgaon with one bird and three eggs to one person, Rampur with two birds and seven eggs to two persons, Parwa with one bird and three eggs to one person and Ratanpatti with two birds and six eggs to two persons in 1962-63.

The birds and eggs supplied by the Animal Husbandry Department to the villages visited were quite inadequate and not much improvement was noticed. Eggs were sold out at the village *hats* at higher price and hardly utilised for hatching. A few better type birds were seen in some of the villages but they could hardly suggest a general upgrading of the standard.

The Animal Husbandry Department of Kahra and Murliganj Blocks appear to have given inadequate help for preventing diseases of the birds. The villagers of Sulindabad, Agwanpur, Nariar and Rampur complained that injections had been given to only seven birds and only fifteen tonic pills were provided during 1962-63. Village Ratanpatti was given one improved bull from Murliganj Block office but due to some reasons, bull was removed from the village after three months. There has been no perceptible improvement in the livestock of the villages visited.

EDUCATION.

Prior to the establishment of Kahra and Murliganj Development Blocks, there were only four primary schools located each at village Kahra, Rampur, Ratanpatti and Sulindabad and three middle schools at village Parwa, Nariar and Kahra. There was no high school in any of the said villages. Before the establishment of the Blocks, very little attention was paid towards education by the villagers. According to 1951 census the total number of literates in Kahra and Murliganj Blocks was 9,392 and 12,569 respectively but there has been an increase in the incidence of literacy. The total number of literates in Murliganj Block area was 14,225 and 16,052 in Kahra Block according to the reports supplied by the Block office. The eight villages visited by the investigators are rather inaccessible in the rainy season and most of these schools were never visited by any Inspecting Officers before the inception of the Blocks. But with the opening of the Blocks, villages are being visited by officials and non-officials as a result of which, the villagers have been in closer contact with urban and other people and they have changed their outlook. The Blocks have opened Social Education Centres at villages Rampur, Parwa and Kahra to educate the adults. It is gathered that through these centres about 175 adult persons in total of the said villages were benefited. There was no check up if this figure is correct.

The table below supplied by Kahra and Murliganj Development Blocks will show the number of schools in the villages during 1962-63:—

Name of villages.	Primary Schools.			Middle Schools.			High Schools.		
	Schools.	Students.	Teachers.	Schools.	Students.	Teachers.	Schools.	Students.	Teachers.
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
1. Kahra	3	135	4	1	67	3	Nil	Nil	Nil
2. Sulindabad ..	2	97	3	1	59	2	Nil	Nil	Nil
3. Agwanpur ..	2	89	4	1	74	2	Nil	Nil	Nil
4. Nariar	3	212	6	1	68	2	Nil	Nil	Nil
5. Parwa	2	112	4	1	75	2	Nil	Nil	Nil
6. Rampur	2	98	4	1	59	2	Nil	Nil	Nil
7. Ratanpatti ..	1	61	2	1	63	3	Nil	Nil	Nil
8. Birgaon	2	108	5	1	67	2	1	60	4

None of the schools is exclusively meant for girls. There is co-education in the schools located in villages Kahra, Rampur, Agwanpur, Ratanpatti and Parwa.

It is apparent from the above statement that there has been some increase in the incidence of educational institutions in the villages. The investigators did not appraise the actual impact. It was, however, gathered that the quality of the teachers was poor, attendance of the students irregular and some of the schools have a very poor number of students for causes not investigated.

HEALTH AND SANITATION.

With the opening of Development Block, one six-bedded indoor State dispensary and three health centres have been provided in each Block. The villages Parwa and Agwanpur have one health centre each. Prior to the establishment of the Block in the district, the people had to go either to Madhepura, Saharsa or Supaul for medical treatment.

The table below supplied by Kahra and Murliganj Development Blocks, will show the number of patients treated in Block dispensaries during 1962-63:—

Name of diseases.	No. of patients treated in Kahra dispensary.	No. of patients treated in Murliganj dispensary.	Death (Total).
1. Dysentery	47	399	Nil.
2. Diarrhoea ..	300	297	Nil.
3. Cholera	272	Nil	5
4. Small-pox	145	Nil	4
5. Other diseases ..	2,439	8,907	15
6. Inoculation ..	78	5,132	Nil.
7. Vaccination	12,657	10,349	Nil.

Secondly, to facilitate the villagers, a number of tube-wells have been set-up in villages Rampur, Parwa, Ratanpatti, Birgaon, Kahra, Agwanpur, Sulindabad and Nariar by the Community Development Department. Besides, two soakage pits each in the said villages have been provided by Community Development Blocks in the district. There has been an improvement in the incidence of health and sanitation.

CO-OPERATIVE SOCIETY.

The table below supplied by the Co-operative section of Kahra and Murliganj Development Blocks will show the expansion of Co-operative Societies:—

Name of the village.	No. of Co-operative Societies.	No. of total members.	Loans advanced to Society. Rs.
1. Kahra	1	47	1,350
2. Sulindabad	1	51	2,000
3. Agwanpur	1	54	1,940
4. Nariar	1	71	2,100
5. Parwa	1	48	1,700
6. Ratanpatti	1	59	1,900
7. Rampur	1	61	2,200
8. Birgaon	1	58	1,800

The business of the co-operative societies is the distribution and collection of loans for agricultural purposes. On enquiry from the officials and non-officials at village Agwanpur, it was ascertained that the society has been declared defunct since 1963 March because the entire amount which was given to Agwanpur Co-operative Society on loan is alleged to be misappropriated by the Honorary Secretary of the said society and a case has been instituted against him by the Government to realise the amount. The habit of repayment of loan does not appear to be strong. It is also not known if the loan taken has been used for the purpose for which it was given.

COMMUNICATIONS.

There has been no improvement in the communications of the villages where the investigations were carried out.

On enquiry it was ascertained that in spite of the schemes, many Blocks have not been able to undertake them due to indifference of the villagers and local contractors. The main object of the Community Development Programme is to foster a spirit of self-help and co-operation in the villages, but, on the contrary, the villagers want every scheme to be wholly executed with Government money. This has been the real cause of non-implementation of the sanctioned schemes in different Blocks of the district.

EMPLOYMENT.

The basic reason for the poverty and low income of the people of the district is excessive dependence on agriculture. The Community Development Project, in general aims at minimising the incidence of under-employment and unemployment. With the introduction of the Community Development Programme in the district, twenty-one Blocks have been started, each Block having 150 personnels. Most of the clerical and menial staff of the office are residents of the locality. Out of about 3,150 persons employed in all the Blocks, the number of educated persons employed is about 2,000. Apart from this, many subsidiary occupations, namely, fishery, small-scale cottage industrial units and the execution of many irrigational and other developmental schemes have eased to some extent the problem of rural under-employment. With the spread of primary education, many educated persons have been given employment as teachers in schools.

CONCLUSION.

Out of 159 villages under Kahra and Murliganj Blocks, a sample survey on the impact of the Blocks on eight villages was made.

The object of the Community Development Programme has been very partially successful. The main impediments are the inherent conservatism of the villagers, their poor economic condition and a certain amount of lack of proper supervision by the Block authorities. The *Gram Panchayats* have also not eased the litigations in the villages and hence the aim of cheap and quick justice

to be administered by the *Gram Panchayat* has also not been achieved so far. Facilities for loan in shape of improved seeds and manures were misused by appropriating seeds for immediate personal consumption. In short, the impact of the Community Development Block on education, agriculture and health, etc., has not been to any appreciable extent.

The villagers have become more caste-conscious and there is now caste tension in some villages. For instance, in Murliganj Block the Yadavas have got the majority and there is ill-feeling between the Yadavas and the non-Yadavas. Similarly in Kahra Block there is ill-feeling between the Maithils and the non-Maithils and at the time of election even a competent candidate is defeated on caste-basis.

It was also noticed that the rich and the powerful persons in the villages want that the schemes should be carried out through them for gaining more profit which is resented by the other sections of people in the villages. There is also a tendency in the Block staff to get a work done sometimes superficially to draw the earmarked money. There is not much of mass contact or group contact among the villagers.

Miscellaneous Occupations.

Miscellaneous occupations cover such occupations which have not been so far covered under the major occupations, viz., agriculture, industry, commerce and transport. They cover public administration, learned professions, domestic and personal services, etc. Persons in the miscellaneous occupations form a very small percentage in the employment structure but have an important bearing on the society and administration. They form the enlightened intelligentsia section of the community and mostly come from the middle class which is the backbone of the society. They have usually supplied the leadership in society.

The *District Census Hand-Book for Saharsa*, 1951 gives some of the figures which have to be included in this category. The District Census Hand-Book for 1961 has not yet been published and the detailed figures are not available.

The figures for 1951 are as follows*:—

	Males.	Females.	Total.
1. Medical and other Health services	823	8	831
2. Educational services and research	573	36	609
3. Police (other than village watchmen)	94	Nil	94
4. Village officers and servants (including village watchmen).	136	Nil	136
5. Employees of State Government	67	Nil	67
6. Employees of Union Government	18	Nil	18

* *District Census Hand-Book, Saharsa*, 1951, pages 39—41.

The strength of the non-gazetted staff under the Saharsa Collectorate in 1963 (July) is reported to be 1,477.

The figures will undergo some changes as there have been additions to the learned professions and to the office personnel in the last one decade. For example, during the last decade there was a large expansion of medical and other health services at Government level as a result of which a large number of doctors, etc., have been employed. The legal profession also had addition. On an enquiry it was found that there were 42 advocates (35 at Madhepura, 5 at Supaul and 2 at Saharsa), 50 pleaders (15 at Madhepura, 19 at Supaul and 16 at Saharsa) and 51 mukhtears (32 at Madhepura, 12 at Supaul and 7 at Saharsa) in the district.

The figures of persons engaged in domestic and personal services according to 1951 census were as follows*:—

	Males.	Females.	Total.
1. Domestic services ..	449	90	539
2. Barbers and beauty shops	239	24	263
3. Laundries and laundry services.	271	40	311
4. Recreation services ..	5	13	18
5. Legal and business services	5	Nil	5
6. Religious, charitable and welfare services.	258	21	279
7. Services otherwise unclassified.	734	12	746

These figures will also have undergone some changes by 1961 when the census was taken. It will be pertinent to observe that there has been a good deal of mobility among the domestic services. Personal services are not preferred even by the sons of the traditional families or castes that did domestic services. They prefer to work as rickshaw-puller or hotel-waiters or in the laundry shops. Tailoring establishments have also increased. Cheap eating houses and tea-shops have sprung up in the urban areas and in the large villages.

* *District Census Hand-Book, Saharsa*, 1951, pages 41-42.

CHAPTER X.

GENERAL ADMINISTRATION.

The district of Saharsa was a part of Bhagalpur district till March, 1954. The *District Gazetteer of Bhagalpur* by J. Byrne (1911) mentions that for administrative purposes there were two subdivisions, namely, Madhepura and Supaul. At each subdivision there was a Subdivisional Magistrate (generally a Deputy Collector of the Provincial Service) most of whose time was usually taken up with criminal work under ordinary conditions. Under stress of special circumstances such as floods or scarcity, the brunt of the work of putting into operation remedial measures fell on the Subdivisional Magistrate in his subdivision. Very little purely revenue work was done at the subdivisions. The area and population of each of the two subdivisions is as follows:—

	Area in square miles.	Population (1901).	Number of persons per square mile.
Madhepura ..	1,176	5,59,310	476
Supaul ..	934	5,10,900	547

For administration of civil justice there were Munsifs who used to sit at Supaul and Madhepura. There were, as well, independent Benches of Honorary Magistrates at Madhepura (6 Honorary Magistrates) and at Bangaon (7 Honorary Magistrates). There were four thanas in total in Madhepura and Supaul subdivisions, namely, Bangaon, Kishanganj, Supaul and Pratapganj and three independent outposts, namely, Dagmara, Daparkha and Bhimnagar. Each of the two subdivisions had its Police Inspector who was a gazetted officer. At Supaul and Madhepura there were subsidiary jails in which accused persons were kept while awaiting trial if they were not released on bail.

These two subdivisions were far flung from Bhagalpur, the district headquarters town and the want of proper communications made it difficult for a proper supervision and co-ordination from Bhagalpur. It took about two days for the District Magistrate or the Superintendent of Police of Bhagalpur to reach Supaul or Madhepura in case of an immediate necessity. The journey used to be done partially by train, partially by boat and several rivers had to be crossed. The journey was extremely difficult in the rainy season or at the time of high flood. The constant flood menace of the Kosi river, the fury of the epidemics which had almost become chronic in some areas and the problems of scarcity and distress necessitated a headquarters for a higher level of administration somewhere

within the two subdivisions of Madhepura and Supaul. It was also difficult to meet the problems of law and order quickly. Madhepura and Supaul subdivisions were made into a sub-district with an Additional District Magistrate at Saharsa from the 1st June, 1944. The sub-district functioned till March, 1954. The Additional District Magistrate was given a separate staff of Magistrates and Revenue Officers and for various purposes he could work independently of the District Magistrate of Bhagalpur and had direct contact with the Divisional Commissioner at Bhagalpur and the Government. It was made clear that this was a tentative arrangement and very soon Saharsa would be made into a separate district. Some of the Government departments started opening their branches at Saharsa after an Additional Magistrate was posted.

On the 1st April, 1954, Saharsa was given the status of a full-fledged district with a total area of 2,143 square miles and a total population of 13,08,198 souls according to 1951 census.* Saharsa district has three subdivisions, i.e., Saharsa Sadar, Madhepura and Supaul. Saharsa Sadar subdivision was carved out of the previous Madhepura subdivision. Madhepura subdivision had three revenue thanas, i.e., Bangaon, Kishanganj and Madhepura. Bangaon revenue thana remained entirely in the Sadar subdivision and police-stations Sourbazar and Sonbarsa were grouped into Sadar subdivision after taking into account some of the villages and chowkidari unions under the above police-stations from the revenue thanas of Madhepura and Kishanganj.

The district has six towns, viz., Saharsa, Supaul, Madhepura, Murliganj, Nirmali and Birpur and 1,353 villages according to 1961 census. The Sadar, Supaul and Madhepura subdivisions have an area of 460.3, 920.7 and 690.4 square miles respectively according to 1961 census. There are sixteen thanas in the district which have been mentioned subdivisionwise in the chapter 'Law, Order and Justice'.

The general administration of the district is vested into the District Magistrate who for administrative purposes is under the control of the Commissioner of Bhagalpur Division with headquarters at Bhagalpur. The District Magistrate receives orders both from the State Government, Patna and the Divisional Commissioner, Bhagalpur.

The District Magistrate is at the apex of the administrative structure, the base of which is being more and more broadened after the State has become a Welfare State. Development programmes for the rural areas have been taken up and Community Development Blocks have been opened. Accent has been put on the Village *Panchayats*. The District Magistrate has been given a large number of officers to help him in the administration of the district. For

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* According to 1961 census the area is 2,105.5 sq. miles and the population is 17,23,566.

revenue purposes, he has an Additional Collector and for development purposes, he has the services of a District Development Officer. Both the Additional Collector and the District Development Officer have their headquarters at Saharsa. There are three Land Reforms Deputy Collectors posted at the headquarters of each of the subdivisions. At the subdivisional headquarters of each of the three subdivisions, there is a Subdivisional Magistrate in charge of Law and Order as well as revenue and development matters. The Subdivisional Officers are under the administrative control of the District Magistrate. For law and order, there is a Superintendent of Police with headquarters at Saharsa. The Superintendent of Police is assisted by four Deputy Superintendents posted at different headquarters of the subdivisions, namely, Supaul, Madhepura, Uda Kishanganj and one attached to the district headquarters. The Deputy Superintendent of Police, Madhepura, controls the areas covered by Sadar subdivision. Details of Police administration will be found in the text on "Law, Order and Justice".

The District Magistrate is responsible for the execution of the planning schemes. He is the head of the District Planning Committee. He has to co-ordinate the functions of all the departments of the Government that are working on development programmes.. The success or failure of the Five-Year Plans will be a responsibility of the District Magistrate. He is also responsible for maintaining law and order.

The District Magistrate of Saharsa has the following gazetted officers under him on the 1st April, 1963:—

(1) Additional Collector—1
(2) District Development Officer—1
(3) Senior Deputy Collector—1
(4) Deputy Magistrates and Deputy Collectors—2
(5) Sub-Deputy Collectors—2
(6) District Welfare Officer—1
(7) District Panchayat Officer—1
(8) District Public Relations Officer—1
(9) Land Acquisition Officer—1
(10) District Statistical Officer—1
(11) District Industries Officer—1
(12) District Accounts Officer—1
(13) District Agriculture Officer—1
(14) Treasury Officer—1
(15) Personal Assistant to Collector—1
(16) Block Development Officer-*cum-Anchal Adhikaris*—21

The Sadar subdivision has the following officers:—

(1) Subdivisional Officer—1

(2) Deputy Collector in-charge Land Reforms and Development—1

(3) Sub-Deputy Collector—1

(4) *Anchal Adhikaris-cum*-Block Development Officers—5

The Madhepura subdivision has the following officers:—

(1) Subdivisional Officer—1

(2) Deputy Collector incharge Land Reforms and Development—1

(3) Deputy Magistrate and Deputy Collector—1

(4) Sub-Deputy Collector—1

(5) *Anchal Adhikaris-cum*-Block Development Officers—7

The Supaul subdivision has the following officers:—

(1) Subdivisional Officer—1

(2) Deputy Collector incharge Land Reforms and Development—1

(3) Sub-Deputy Collectors—2

(4) *Anchal Adhikari-cum*-Block Development Officers—9

DISTRICT MAGISTRATE'S OFFICE.

The old set-up of the District Magistrate's Office in all the districts followed a pattern well suited to that of a component unit of a Police State. Since the advent of independence in the country in 1947 there have been very considerable changes in the character of the State and it is now a Welfare State. The development work, as mentioned before, has been taken up as a matter of State policy. Landlordism has been abolished by law and now there is no intermediary link between the State and the cultivators. Various welfare measures for social uplift have been taken up. The set-up of the Collectorate, the office of the District Officer has been reorganised mainly on the lines of a report of Sri B. D. Pande, a senior I.C.S. Officer, who was especially deputed to study the problems of the reorganisation of the districts and subdivisional offices. This scheme was implemented by the Government in July, 1958 and the set-up of the district offices has been completely changed to suit the new conditions. The main Collectorate office is now divided into seven principal sections as follows:—

(1) Confidential—This was to be directly under the Collector.

(2) General Office—This was to replace the English Office.

(3) Revenue Office—This was to correspond to the Revenue Office set up on the abolition of *zamindaris*.

(4) Development Office.

(5) Establishment Office.

(6) Legal Section Office.

(7) Treasury and Accounts.

The following is the distribution of subjects:—

Section I—Confidential.

Section II—General.—(1) Law and Order, (2) Agrarian Disputes, (3) Maintenance of Public Order Act, (4) Collective Fines, (5) Police and Homeguards, (6) Requisitioning and derequisitioning of property. (7) Allotment of houses, (8) Soldiers', Sailors' and Airmen's Board, (9) Elections, (10) Census, (11) Cinemas and dramatic performances, (12) Licenses (Arms, Explosives, etc.), (13) Press, including examination of newspaper cuttings, (14) Public Relations, (15) Relief and Rehabilitation of displaced persons from Pakistan, (16) Evacuee Property Act, (17) Passports and Visas, (18) Political Sufferers, (19) Domicile Certificate, (20) Jails, (21) Supply and Price Control, (22) Anti-Corruption, (23) Assembly, Council and Parliament questions, (24) Local Bodies, i.e., Municipalities, District Boards, Notified Area Committees and other Union Committees, (25) Library, (26) Forms and Stationery, (27) Labour, including Minimum Wages Act, Workmen's compensation, etc.

Section III—Revenue.—(1) Land Reforms, (2) Tenancy Act, (3) Rent and Cess, (4) Khas Mahal, (5) Rent Commutation, (6) Chowkidari, (7) Settlement, (8) Balabandi, (9) Malkhana, (10) Registration, (11) Charkhana, (12) Embankment, (13) Excise and Opium, (14) Kanungo Establishment, (15) Taxation Measures (16) Record Room, (17) Copying Department, (18) Certificate, (19) Nazarat, (20) Circuit House, (21) Land Acquisition, (22) Ferries, (23) Mining, (24) Treasure Trove, (25) Stamps, (26) Crop and Weather Reports, (27) Flood and Scarcity.

Section IV—Development.—(1) Five-Year Plan and Co-ordination, (2) District Development Office, (3) District Planning Committee, (4) District Education Committe, (5) Community Project and National Extension Service, (6) Local Development Works Programme. (7) Irrigation (major, medium and minor), (8) Reclamation of Waste Land, (9) Welfare of Scheduled Castes, Scheduled Tribes and Backward Classes, (10) Gram Panchayats, (11) Vested zamindari improvement

works, (12) Welfare activities of other departments including Grow More Food, (13) Statistics, (14) Forests, (15) Loans including Agriculturists' Loans, Land Improvement Loans, Loans under the State Aid to Industries Act, etc., (16) National Savings Scheme, (17) Works Staff in the District.

Section V—Establishment.—(1) Personal cases—maintenance of service books, character rolls, leave accounts, etc., of personnel employed under the Collector, (2) Appointments, postings and transfers, (3) Leave, (4) Departmental Proceedings, (5) Provident Fund Gratuity, (6) Pensions, (7) Security, (8) Bill and Budget Works of the Collectorate.

Section VI—Legal Section.—(1) Revenue and Judicial Munshikhana, (2) Civil Suits, (3) Pauper Suits, (4) Criminal Motions, (5) Inspection of Trial Registers, (6) Appeals, (7) Correspondence with the Legal Remembrancer, (8) High Court, (9) Release of Prisoners, (10) Pleaders, Mukhtears and Revenue Agents, (11) Probate, (12) Religious Endowments, (13) Payment of Pleaders' bills, (14) Judicial Accounts, (15) Criminal Fines, (16) Law Agents and Law Clerks, (17) Other Criminal, Civil or Revenue Appeals or Motions and matters connected therewith, (18) Court Malkhana.

Section VII—Treasury and Accounts.—(1) Treasury and Accounts, (2) Sale of Stamps.

There was a certain amount of distinction between a Sadar subdivision and a mofussil subdivision. This distinction was done away with.

The Chief Secretary in his no. OM/R-302|56—10443, dated the 20th December 1957, had approved of the suggestions of Mr. Pande as indicated and informed the District Officers by name that the arrangements should be made forthwith to introduce the Reorganisation Scheme in the districts and subdivisions from the 2nd January 1958. He further ordered that the Sadar Subdivisional Officers should function separately from the Collectorate like Mofussil Subdivisional Officer. There was a further confirmation of Sri Pande's scheme in the letter of Sri M. S. Rao, I.C.S., Chief Secretary, bearing no. R2-302|56-CSR—365, dated the 9th July 1958.

NATIONAL PLANNING AND COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT.

As already mentioned with Independence in 1947 the character of the administration at both the levels of the Centre and the State underwent a great change. Maintenance of law and order and the collection of revenue were the main features of the administration before 1947. The pattern of the Welfare State had to be brought

about slowly and cautiously. At the Centre the Planning Commission was to lay down the policy and to formulate schemes for the States as well and also to co-ordinate the development work at the States. The Centre placed large sums of money to the States to work out the schemes. The Centre in many cases gave technical aid as well.

The Planning Council and the State Planning Board were constituted at the State level also to formulate and work out the schemes given by the Centre and made at the State level and to see to a proper development of the rural areas. A further aim was to decentralise the activities of the State which were so long mostly concentrated at the district level.

With this object the Five-Year Plans formulated at the Centre were taken up at the State level along with the State schemes. A large number of welfare schemes were taken up all over the district in the First Five-Year Plan sponsored in 1951-52. The Second Five-Year Plan sponsored in 1955-56 underlined the work taken up and suggested an extension. The same work has been continued in the Third Five-Year Plan which started in 1961-62. The various economic plans undertaken as a part of the State policy were to be partially implemented through the Community Development Projects and National Extention Service Blocks. A Block is an administrative unit for the rural areas mainly for development and revenue work.

There are 21 Blocks-*cum*-Anchals in the district, with headquarters distributed all over the district. A Block covers a number of specified villages with a Block headquarters and usually the name of the Block is the same or that of the headquarters village. There is a Block Development Officer with a number of other officers under him such as a Doctor, a Statistical Supervisor, an Agricultural Officer, an Animal Husbandry man, and a Social Organiser. The Block Development Officer is entrusted with the working of the schemes and projects sanctioned and also to evolve schemes and projects for the development of the village under him. The Block Development Officer is also entrusted to collect revenue and he has been given *karamcharis* for this work. He is not entrusted with judicial work so that he can devote his whole time for an intensive co-ordinated rural development of the area with the active participation of the people. If a Block Development Officer cannot draw out the co-operation of the people he has failed in his object.

Agriculture Department.

There is a Deputy Director of Agriculture with headquarters at Saharsa under the Director of Agriculture, Bihar, at Patna.

The post of the Deputy Director of Agriculture was created in 1959 at Saharsa to control both Saharsa and Purnea districts. The Deputy Director has four officers under him, namely, the Assistant Director of Agriculture, Assistant Director of Agricultural Farm,

Instructor in Plant Protection, Agronomy, Chemistry and Engineering and Assistant Fisheries Development Officer. These officers are meant for the entire range.

The District Agriculture Officer is meant exclusively for the district. He has four Subdivisional Agriculture Officers. Two of them are posted at Saharsa Sadar subdivision while Madhepura and Supaul subdivisions have one officer each. The Subdivisional Agriculture Officers are assisted by three Additional Subdivisional Agriculture Officers with their headquarters at Saharsa Sadar, Madhepura and Supaul. The Additional Subdivisional Agriculture Officers are meant for the Government Farms.

The District Agriculture Officer is also assisted by a team of subject-matter specialists in Botany, Horticulture, Chemistry, Engineering and Fisheries. Their job is to train the Village Level Workers and to collect information regarding the local problems with which the Agriculture Extension Supervisors, the Village Level Workers and the cultivators come across during the implementation of the agricultural programme and communicate them to the Regional Director of Agriculture, Sabour (Bhagalpur), for providing practical solutions. The Subdivisional Agriculture Officer is also assisted by a team of especially trained staff in Fisheries and Horticulture. Field trials on fertilisers to find out the appropriate doses for different localities are conducted throughout the district.

Usually there is an Agriculture Extension Supervisor at the headquarters of the Community Development Blocks to look after agricultural programme. He is under the administrative control of the Block Development Officer.

There are 17 Seed Multiplication Farms of 25 acres each at Sonbarsa, Nauhatta, Sirai, Singheshwar, Uda Kishanganj, Alamnagar, Chousa, Murliganj, Kumarkhand, Chausipatti, Kishanpur, Chhatapur, Tribeniganj, Birpur, Nirmali, Raghopur and Pipra and two farms of 50 acres at Kahra and Singheshwar. There is a District Experimental Farm at Agwanpur of 100 acres in Sadar subdivision.

There is one Plant Protection Inspector and a team of Field Operators to fight against crop pests and diseases. There is a godown at Saharsa town where pesticides, sprays and dusters are sold to the cultivators.

ANIMAL HUSBANDRY DEPARTMENT.

There is a District Animal Husbandry Officer, with his headquarters at Saharsa to look after the Animal Husbandry Department in the district. He is under the administrative control of the Deputy Director of Animal Husbandry, Bhagalpur Range, Bhagalpur and the Director of Animal Husbandry with his headquarters at Patna.

Before September, 1954, the present Animal Husbandry Department was running under two different departments, namely, Veterinary Department and Animal Husbandry Department under two technical heads. In September, 1954, these two departments were amalgamated and the Director of Veterinary Services was designated as the Director of Animal Husbandry, Bihar.

The District Animal Husbandry Officer is assisted by one Subdivisional Animal Husbandry Officer posted at Saharsa, 21 Animal Husbandry Supervisors who are posted in each Block, two stockmen and one messenger to assist the Animal Husbandry Supervisors. Apart from them a Livestock Inspector and Fodder Overseer are working under the guidance of the District Animal Husbandry Officer at the district headquarters.

During the First Five-Year Plan four schemes were taken up, namely, opening of the Artificial Insemination Centres and Sub-Centres, Hospital and Dispensary (Class I Veterinary Dispensary), distribution of bulls and opening of key villages in Bihar. During the Second Five-Year Plan nine additional schemes were started.

A brief mention of some of the important schemes may be made:—

(a) *Bull Distribution Scheme.*—This scheme was started in the First Five-Year Plan. *Hariana* bulls are distributed in each block and Rs. 10 is given to each bull-keeper per month for the maintenance. The services of the bulls are obtained without any charges.

(b) *Artificial Insemination Scheme.*—This scheme was taken up in the First Five-Year Plan and during this period two Artificial Insemination Centres were started at Madhepura and Supaul. During the Second Five-Year Plan three Artificial Insemination Centres were opened at Uda Kishanganj, Murliganj and Nirmali.

(c) *Eradication of Rinderpest.*—This scheme started functioning in March, 1960. Under this scheme it has been decided to eradicate Rinderpest disease by vaccinating all the heads of cattle.

(d) *Fodder Development.*—To encourage the farmers fodder growing seeds and cuttings of different types of fodder are distributed to the farmers free of cost. Besides this, at each Block headquarters, in two acres of land different types of fodder, namely, Napier, Para, Lucerne and Barseam have been introduced in the fodder demonstration plots.

(e) *Cattle Shows.*—To encourage the cattle-owners for improving their livestock, one annual cattle show in each Block is organised. Annual District Cattle Shows are also held in a year.

PUBLIC WORKS DEPARTMENT.

There is only one division of the Public Works Department under an Executive Engineer with headquarters at Saharsa. He is under the control of the Superintending Engineer with his headquarters at Purnea and the Chief Engineer, Public Works Department, Bihar, at Patna.

The main duty of the Executive Engineer is the construction of roads and bridges and buildings, etc., and to maintain the works already constructed. The Executive Engineer supervises and controls the work of the Subdivisional Officers of the Public Works Department. He has also his responsibility in controlling the expenditure and make payments to the contractors.

The Saharsa Division has four subdivisions, namely, Saharsa proper, Supaul, Madhepura North and Madhepura South with nine sections in all, namely, Saharsa Section I and Section II, Baijnathpur, Supaul Section I and Section II, Murliganj, Kishanganj, Madhepura headquarters and Raghopur. The four subdivisions are under the charge of four Subdivisional Officers with their headquarters at Saharsa proper, Supaul, Madhepura North and Madhepura South. There are nine Sectional Officers under the Division to supervise the execution of works under the guidance of the Subdivisional Officers.

MEDICAL DEPARTMENT.

There are two distinct sections so far as the administration of the Health Department is concerned. Broadly speaking one section is the preventive side which is known as Public Health Department and the other section is the curative side known as the Medical Department. The former is headed by the District Medical Officer of Health and the latter by Civil Surgeon. The functions of both the officers are different, although in certain matters the District Medical Officer of Health is to act in consultation with the Civil Surgeon.

The Civil Surgeon, who is a member of the State Medical Service, is the Superintendent of all the hospitals and dispensaries in the district maintained by the District Board or the Government. He exercises complete professional control over the Government Medical Officers in the hospitals and dispensaries. He is also expected to help the Mission and other hospitals within the district.

During 1947-48, the Additional Civil Surgeon-*cum*-Executive Medical Officer used to be the head of the Medical Department and the office was located at Bariahi. In April, 1956, the office was shifted to the outdoor block of the Sadar Hospital, Saharsa and in 1957 the office was shifted to its own building. Details will be found in the text on "Medical and Public Health Services".

According to a Government Circular no. 11-A3-43 of 1958-59, dated the 3rd January 1959, the posts of Civil Surgeons in the districts were converted into the posts of Senior Executive Medical

Officers and Civil Surgeons with the result that in this district the Senior Executive Medical Officer is responsible for the efficient implementation, supervision and control of all public health measures, preventive as well as curative.

The Senior Executive Medical Officer is responsible for the enforcement of drug control measures and as such he can inspect any druggist's shop within the district and take steps for the prosecution of lapses. He is the authority to issue license for medical shops and also to cancel the same in case of non-observance of prescribed rules.

He is expected to scrutinise the expenditure and accounts of every hospital and dispensary in his district and guide the managing body. In all professional matters his decision will be final, but if any difference of opinion arises between him and the managing body regarding any non-professional matter affecting the management of the institute, a reference is made to the Director of Health Services for a decision.

Details of the hospitals and the dispensaries will be found in the text on "Medical and Public Health Services".

Electricity Department.

This department was started in 1956 at a subdivisional level at Saharsa. The Electricity Subdivisional Officer with headquarters at Saharsa is in charge of Saharsa Electricity Department. Hs is under the control of the Executive Engineer with headquarters at Katihar in Purnea district and the Electrical Superintending Engineer with headquarters at Muzaffarpur. The Chief Engineer, Electricity Department, Bihar, at Patna is the head of the department. The Subdivisional Electrical Officer is helped by three Sectional Officers posted at Saharsa, Madhepura and Supaul respectively.

About six towns and twenty-three villages have been electrified till the end of March, 1963. The important towns electrified are Saharsa, Madhepura, Supaul, Murliganj, Nirmali and Birpur. Some of the villages electrified are Kahra, Bariahi, Bangaon, Panchgachia, Panchgachia Railway Station, Barail, Parsarma, Sukhpur, Karampur, Sourbazar, Mithai, Dhanchhoha and Singheshwar, etc. The spread of electricity has not been very rapid in the district due to the bad communications and the economic condition of the people. There is very little demand of power for industry.

The following statement shows the total work done up to March, 1963, in Saharsa district:—

1. High Tension Extension in miles—
   11 K.V.—(103 miles).
2. Low Tension Extension in miles—
   One phase—Nil.
   Two phase—40 miles.
   Three phase—15.13 miles.

3. Distribution of Transformer—
   (1) 100 K.V.A.—7
   (2) 50 K.V.A.—15
   (3) 25 K.V.A.—10
   (4) 15 K.V.A.—Nil.

REGISTRATION DEPARTMENT.

There are five Registration Offices in the district, namely, Madhepura (established in 1865), Supaul (established in 1891), Uda Kishanganj (established in 1957), Ganpatganj (established in 1918) and Saharsa (established in 1954). The Saharsa Registration Office was shifted from Bangaon in 1954 when Saharsa gained the status of a full-fledged district.

The Indian Registration Act, 1908, the Indian Stamp Act of 1899 and other allied Acts are in force in the district.

The District Sub-Registrar, Saharsa, is the departmental head of the Registration Department under the immediate administrative control of the District Registrar, i.e., the District Magistrate. The Inspector-General of Registration, Patna, is the head of the department. Each of the Sub-registry Offices at Supaul, Madhepura, Ganpatganj and Uda Kishanganj has a Sub-Registrar. The District Sub-Registrar is to supervise the work in all the Registry Offices. He has to inspect the *muffasil* offices once a year. The District Sub-Registrar deals with the registration of the documents within his jurisdiction.

The District Sub-Registrar's office at the headquarters of the district has got a record room where there are many old registers and indices including copies of documents registered in 1865 A.D.

The statistics below supplied by the Registration Department, Saharsa, show the number of documents registered, receipts and expenditure of the whole district from 1953 to 1962. The figures include those of all the Registration Offices located in the district:—

Year.	Documents registered.	Receipts in rupees.	Expenditure in rupees.
1953	21.192	1,11,482	37,144
1954	21,206	1,15.676	43,968
1955	25,859	1,28.527	51.137
1956	34,163	1,80.596	51.636
1957	42,812	2,28,159	59.719
1958	40,102	2.19,926	67,757
1959	35,918	2,08,983	61,085
1960	46,063	2,59,727	73.423
1961	48,423	3,01,473	73,498
1962	48,111	2,99,165	94,019

The Money-lenders' Act came into force in 1938, authorising the Registering Officer to grant licenses. The total number of licenses issued to the money-lenders is 390 during 1962-63.

The District Sub-Registrar is the Marriage Officer under the Special Marriage Act, 1954, but no marriage has been performed yet in Saharsa district under this Act.

By notification no. A|K3-104|56-R.—1343, dated the 18th June 1956, issued by the Government of Bihar, Revenue Department (Registration Section) and by an amendment passed by the Parliament, the system of mentioning caste in the body of documents has been abolished.

All the Registering Officers are required by an order of Government to pass an examination in the tribal languages. The officers of the Registration Department are recruited by the Bihar Public Service Commission after passing the competitive examination and they are confirmed in their appointment after passing the departmental examination.

Under the Government orders, the officers of the department are eligible for appointment as Honorary Magistrates and Deputy Collectors. The Sub-Registrars may also be employed in connection with other duties with the permission of the District Registrar subject to the order of the District Magistrate.

Commercial Taxes Office.

The Saharsa Circle of the Commercial Taxes was created in 1950 at Saharsa. Prior to 1950 it was amalgamated with Bhagalpur Circle. The controlling head of this department is the Commissioner of Commercial Taxes at Patna. The Superintendent of Commercial Taxes is the head of the department at the district level. There are two Assistant Superintendents and one Inspector of Commercial Taxes attached to this Circle to assist the Superintendent in the assessment of taxes and for making enquiries.

The department is concerned with the assessment and realisation of the following taxes:—

(1) *Agriculture Income-tax.*—It was levied in 1938 under the Bihar Agricultural Income-tax Act, 1938, but its administration was taken over by the Commercial Taxes Department in 1944-45. The collection had reached its peak in 1960-61 when it rose to Rs. 2,06,711 which was mainly due to enhancement in the rate of tax.

(2) *Bihar Sales Tax.*—It was introduced in the State from 1944-45. In 1961-62 the collection from this amounted to Rs. 4,49,978.99. The collection in 1957-58, 1958-59, 1959-60 and 1960-61 in this Circle amounted to Rs. 5,50,940, Rs. 4,94,468, Rs. 3,95,429 and Rs. 4,23,440 respectively. The fluctuating trends during these years are mainly due to the de-registration of a large number of dealers consequent upon the raising of the register able limit from over Rs. 10,000 to over Rs. 15,000 from 1954.

(3) *Central Sales Tax.*—Central Sales Tax Act, 1956, was introduced in Bihar from the 1st July, 1956 and the

collection from this tax was introduced in 1959-60 at Saharsa. The receipts were Rs. 1,312 and Rs. 1,098.01 in 1959-60 and 1961-62 respectively.

(4) *Entertainment Tax.*—The administration of the tax was taken over by the Commercial Taxes Department in 1948-49. In 1961-62 the receipt was Rs. 71,122.87.

(5) *Electricity Duty.*—It was first levied in the district in 1948-49. The collection from this tax reached its peak in 1961-62. This increase was due to a rise in duty.

(6) *Motor Spirit Sales Tax.*—Before 1949 this tax was realised by the Excise Department. In 1957-58 the total receipt from this tax amounted to Rs. 69,552. Since then there had been constant rise in the collection and Rs. 96,530.47 was the receipt in 1961-62. This was partly due to a rise in duty and because more vehicles came on the roads as the roads were improved.

(7) *Passengers and Goods Transport Tax.*—It was levied for the first time in 1950. During 1955-56 the total yield from the tax was Rs. 2,830. In 1961-62 it showed a downward tendency, i.e., the total yield was Rs. 280 only because the Act was declared *ultra vires* in September, 1960.

The statement below supplied by the Commercial Taxes Office, Saharsa, shows the receipts from 1955-56 to 1961-62:—

Year.	Agricultural Income-tax.	Bihar Sales Tax.	Central Sales Tax.
1	2	3	4
	Rs.	Rs.	Rs.
1955-56	58,379.00	4,22,557.00	This tax was in force during 1959-60.
1956-57	60,305.00	5,39,175.00	
1957-58	70,470.00	5,50,940.00	Nil
1958-59	86,565.00	4,94,466.00	Nil
1959-60	61,621.00	3,95,429.00	1,312.00
1960-61	2,06,711.00	4,23,440.00	2,300.00
1961-62	88,587.63	4,49,078.99	1,098.01

Year.	Entertainment Tax.	Electricity Duty.	Motor Spirit Tax	Passengers and Goods Transport.
1	5	6	7	8
	Rs.	Rs.	Rs.	Rs.
1955-56	15,577.00	431.00	17,337.00	2,830.00
1956-57	45,607.00	1,187.00	34,500.00	2,195.00
1957-58	38,570.00	2,533.00	69,552.00	6,538.00
1958-59	67,790.00	3,641.00	44,939.00	9,934.00
1959-60	54,372.00	74,100.00	68,197.00	8,674.00
1960-61	62,799.00	47,214.00	70,636.00	3,315.00
1961-62	71,122.67	55,321.45	96,530.47	280.00 (The Act was declared *ultra vires* in September, 1960.)

EXCISE DEPARTMENT.

The Superintendent of Excise is the head of the administration at the district level. He is under the immediate control of the District Magistrate, Saharsa. The Superintendent of Excise is also under the administrative control of the Deputy Commissioner of Excise, Northern Range, Muzaffarpur, and the Commissioner of Excise, Patna.

The district is divided into two ranges, namely, Saharsa Sadar and Supaul under the charge of one Inspector with headquarters at Saharsa. These two ranges have been further divided into four Circles, namely, Sadar, Uda Kishanganj, Supaul and Raghopur. Each Circle is under the charge of one Sub-Inspector.

There are only two Warehouses located at Madhepura and Supaul. There is also a *Ganja gola* in Madhepura. Each Warehouse is under the charge of a Sub-Inspector.

The consumption of foreign liquor is confined only to the richer class. The greater portion of the excise revenue is derived from the taxes levied on country spirit, toddy and *bhang*.

The consumption of opium has been sought to be restricted by the prohibition of free sale of opium. Opium is sold now for medicinal purposes only to those persons who hold a medical certificate from a proper authority that consumption of opium is a necessity on medical grounds.

There is no prohibition in Saharsa district. The State has not yet adopted prohibition as a policy. An attempt is made to restrict consumption by the raising of the prices of the intoxicants through the increase of excise duty and imposing certain restrictions against consumption of intoxicants at public places. Bar licences are restricted. The incidence of illicit distillery cases is low. Owing to the proximity of Nepal, non-duty paid Nepali *ganja* is smuggled. During 1961-62 and 1962-63 about 358.552 kilograms and 774.62 kilograms of non-duty paid Nepali *ganja* respectively were seized. There must have been a quantity smuggled without detection.

The following table will show the number of illicit distillery, *ganja* and *bhang* cases during 1959-60 to 1962-63:—

Number of cases.	1959-60.	1960-61.	1961-62.	1962-63.
Ganja	49	53	62	36
Bhang	3	6	9	2
Illicit Distillery	7	10	14	[illegible]

STATEMENT SHOWING CONSUMPTION OF EXCISABLE ARTICLES AND REVENUE DERIVED THEREFROM IN THE DISTRICT OF SAHARSA DURING 1954-55 TO 1961-62.

Year.		Distillery liquor.			
	No. of licence.	Consumption in litre per gallon.	Licence fee.	Duty.	Total.
1	2	3	4	5	6
			Rs.	Rs.	Rs.
1954-55 ..	49	9,080.1	31.094	1,41,686	1,72,780
1955-56 ..	49	9,855.9	31 969	1,55,465	1,87,434
1956-57 ..	49	11,423.4	39,493	1,83,068	2,22,561
1957-58 ..	49	8,699.7	30,846	1,37,192	1,68,038
1958-59 ..	49	7,956.8	24,582	1,27,402	1,51,984
1959-60 ..	49	9,129.2	26,243	1,45,874	1,72,117
1960-61 ..	49	10,481.6	39,291	1,87,901	2,27,192
1961-62 ..	49	12,583.4	45,278	2.33,175	27,845.3

Year.		Ganja.			
	Number of licence.	Consumption.	Licence fee.	Duty.	Total.
1	7	8	9	10	11
		Md. Sr. ch.	Rs.	Rs.	Rs.
1954-55 ..	50	23 29 0	5,269	50.752	56,019
1955-56 ..	50	25 1 0	5.267	54.662	59,929
1956-57 ..	50	35 17 0	10,098	77,995	88,093
1957-58 ..	50	25 13 0	7.336	54,945	62,281
1958-59 ..	50	17 30 0	3,593	39,985	43,578
1959-60 ..	50	17 26 0	3,041	38.292	41,333
1960-61 ..	50	17 38 0	3,664	39,875	43,539
1961-62 ..	50	13 21 0	2,426	45,923	48,349

Year.		Bhang.			
	Number of licence.	Consumption	Licence fee.	Duty.	Total.
1	12	13	14	15	16
		Sr. Ch.	Rs.	Rs.	Rs.
1954-55 ..	4	6 0	61	45	106
1955-56 ..	4	8 0	80	72	152
1956-57 ..	4	11 0	126	100	226
1957-58 ..	4	8 0	93	72	165
1958-59 ..	4	4 0	56	36	102
1959-60 ..	4	9 0	59	83	142
1960-61 ..	4	10 0	83	94	177
1961-62 ..	4	10 0	73	90	163

Year.		Opium.						
		Number of licence.	Consumption.			Licence fee.	Duty.	Total.
1		17	18			19	20	21
			Md.	Sr.	ch.	Rs.	Rs.	Rs.
1954-55	..	$\frac{22}{3}$	16	8	0	3,436	3,870	7,306
1955-56	..	$\frac{22}{6}$	17	8	0	3,377	7,525	10,902
1956-57	..	$\frac{22}{6}$	17	8	0	4,383	7,525	11,908
1957-58	..	22	11	0	0	3,356	4,730	8,086
1958-59	..	22	10	8	0	2,235	4,515	6.758
1959-60	..	..	3	8	0	646	1,505	2,151
1960-61	..	..	3	0	0	564	1,290	1,854
1961-62	..	..	3	8	0	644	1,505	2,149

Year.		Foreign liquor.			
		No. of licence.	Licence fee.	Duty.	Total.
1		22	23	24	25
			Rs.	Rs.	Rs.
1954-55	..	2	795	..	795
1955-56	..	2	1,215	..	1,215
1956-57	..	2	685	..	685
1957-58	..	2	624	..	624
1958-59	..	2	401	..	401
1959-60	..	2	727	..	727
1960-61	..	2	1,056	..	1,056
1961-62	..	2	1,992	..	1,992

Year.	Commercial spirits.			
	No. of licence.	Licence fee.	Duty.	Total.
1	26	27	28	29
		Rs.	Rs.	Rs.
1954-55 ..	19	1,476	..	1,476
1955-56 ..	22	1,704	5	1,709
1956-57 ..	28	2,576	115	2,691
1957-58 ..	..	2,702	38	2,740
1958-59 ..	24	2,874	35	2,909
1959-60 ..	24	2,848	23	2,871
1960-61 ..	25	3,355	35	3,390
1961-62 .	25	3,824	1,871	5,695

Year.	Tari.			
	No. of licence.	Licence fee.	Free tax.	Total.
1	30	31	32	33
		Rs.	Rs.	Rs.
1954-55 ..	120	37,333	43,936	81,269
1955-56 .	120	47,347	45,024	92,371
1956-57 ..	120	48,569	43,316	91,912
1957-58 ..	120	42,266	42,595	84,861
1958-59 ..	120	49,141	37,431	86,572
1959-60 ..	120	53,300	41,859	95,159
1960-61 ..	119	52,020	43,185	95,205
1961-62 .	119	50,782	46,424	97,206

Year.	Pachwai.		Miscellaneous.	Grand Total.
	No. of licence.	Licence fee.		
1	34	35	36	37
		Rs	Rs.	Rs.
1954-55 ..	27	54	6,231	3.26,036
1955-56 ..	27	54	4.056	3,57,822
1956-57 ..	26	52	2,660	4,20,783
1957-58 ..	17	34	2,408	3,29,237
1958-59 ..	..	..	2.883	2,95,187
1959-60 ..	..	..	5,029	3.19.529
1960-61 ..	..	..	3.712	3.76.125
1961-62 ..	..	..	3.064	4.37,671

WELFARE DEPARTMENT.

This department has been created at the Government level to look after the particular interests of the Scheduled Tribes, Scheduled Castes and the Backward Classes. There is a District Welfare Officer who works both under the District Magistrate and the Secretary, Welfare Department at the Government level.

The Welfare office was started at Saharsa in 1948. At that time the Harijan Welfare Officer was the administrative head at the district level and he used to be under the administrative control of the Divisional Welfare Officer, Bhagalpur. From 1958, the post of the Divisional Welfare Officer was abolished and the post of the Harijan Welfare Officer was designated as the District Welfare Officer.

The District Welfare Officer works under the District Magistrate. There is an Assistant Welfare Officer to assist the District Welfare Officer. A Welfare Inspector has been posted in each Block.

The District Welfare Officer is to implement the various welfare programmes indicated in the First, Second and Third Five-Year Plans for the uplift of the people belonging to the Scheduled Tribes, Scheduled Castes and the Backward Classes, such as, establishment of grain *golas*, construction of special schools, hostels, residential buildings, sinking of wells, etc.

Nine grain *golas* have been constructed for the Harijans at Mahishi, Sourbazar, Sonbarsa, Murliganj, Madhepura (two), Singheshwar, Supaul (two) and three for the Adivasis at Mahuabazar, Gamharia and Giridharpatti.

GRAM PANCHAYAT OFFICE.

This office was started in 1948 at Saharsa. The District *Gram Panchayat* Officer with headquarters at Saharsa, is under the control of the District Magistrate. At the Divisional level the Regional Deputy Director is the administrative head with headquarters at Bhagalpur. The Director of *Gram Panchayats*, Patna, is the administrative head.

There are eleven *Gram Panchayat* Supervisors with their headquarters at Kahra, Sonbarsa, Madhepura, Murliganj, Kishanganj, Alamnagar, Birpur, Nirmali, Raghopur and Vishanpur. Details will be found in the text on 'Local Self-Government'.

CO-OPERATIVE DEPARTMENT.

The Co-operative Department for the district is divided into three Circles, namely, Saharsa, Madhepura and Supaul. Three Assistant Registrars with headquarters at Saharsa, Supaul and Madhepura are in charge of their respective Circles.

The Assistant Registrars are under the Deputy Registrar, Co-operative Societies, Bhagalpur and the Registrar at Patna respectively. One Inspector designated as Co-operative Extension Supervisor and one Auditor are posted at each of the Block headquarters.

There are two Central Co-operative Banks at Supaul and Madhepura respectively. The Co-operative Banks are under the control of the Managers posted at Supaul and Madhepura.

EDUCATION DEPARTMENT.

The District Education Officer with his headquarters at Saharsa looks after the Education Department at the district level. He works under the control of the Regional Deputy Director of Education with his headquarters at Bhagalpur. The Director of Public Instruction with headquarters at Patna is the head of the department.

The District Education Officer is assisted by a number of officers. Each subdivision is placed under the charge of a Subdivisional Education Officer with headquarters at Saharsa Sadar, Madhepura and Supaul.

At the district level the District Education Officer is assisted by the District Superintendent of Education, District Social Education Organiser, Deputy Superintendent of Physical Education posted at Saharsa. There are a Deputy Superintendent for Basic Education and a District Inspectress of Schools at Saharsa.

There are three Deputy Inspectors of Schools with their headquarters at Saharsa Sadar, Madhepura and Supaul. There are 31 Sub-Inspectors of Schools in the district who are responsible for their respective Circle. With effect from December, 1962, the Sub-Inspector of Schools has been re-designated as Education Extension Officer. There is one Deputy Inspectress of Schools posted at Supaul. She is meant for the whole district.

UNIFIED MINOR IRRIGATION DEPARTMENT.

Minor Irrigation Schemes include *bundhs*, tanks and *ahars* as well as repairs to old minor irrigation works. These Minor Irrigation works were carried out by three agencies, namely, the Revenue Department, the Agriculture Department and the Community Development Department respectively. To avoid overlapping, the Unified Minor Irrigation Division has been set up which looks after all such schemes. This agency (Division) was created at Saharsa on the 30th June, 1960. The districts of Saharsa, Purnea and North Monghyr, originally formed parts of this Division with the following subdivisions:—

Saharsa district—

(1) Saharsa subdivision.

(2) Supaul subdivision.

(3) Madhepura subdivision.

Purnea district—

(1) Purnea subdivision.

(2) Katihar subdivision.

(3) Araria subdivision.

(4) Kishanganj subdivision.

North Monghyr—

(1) Khagaria subdivision.

(2) Begusarai subdivision.

Since October, 1962, the charge of North Monghyr has been handed over to the Executive Engineer, Minor Irrigation Division, Monghyr and now Saharsa and Purnea districts are left in this Division under the charge of an Executive Engineer. The Executive Engineer is under the administrative control of the District Magistrate and also the Chief Engineer, Unified Minor Irrigation, Patna.

ELECTION DEPARTMENT.

This department was established for election purposes in 1948, when Saharsa was a sub-district. The District Election Officer runs the office under the control of the District Magistrate and the Chief Electoral Officer, Patna. He is assisted by three Election Supervisors who are in charge of Sadar, Madhepura and Supaul subdivisions. The Election Department has to maintain an up-to-date electoral roll and to see to the carrying out of the instructions of the Government regarding elections. With the widening of the franchise the work of the department has become very important.

LABOUR DEPARTMENT.

The District Labour Officer, Saharsa, is the head of the labour office. He is under the direct control of the Assistant Labour Commissioner, Bhagalpur. The Labour Commissioner, Patna, is the head of the department.

There are three Labour Inspectors posted at Saharsa Sadar, Madhepura and Supaul and the District Labour Officer is assisted by them.

The main duties of the Labour Officer are to promote harmonious relations between the labour and the management and to act as the Liaison Officer between them. He has to insist on the amenities to the labour and to see that the labour laws are implemented. In cases of disputes he has to take necessary steps according to law.

INDUSTRIES DEPARTMENT.

The department was started in 1954 at Saharsa. One Inspector was posted to Saharsa to look after the work. In April, 1963, the department is under a District Industries Officer who is under the

direct control of the Director of Industries, Bihar, Patna. The District Industries Officer has an Inspector at Saharsa and 16 Industrial Extension Supervisors posted at various Block headquarters of the district. The main function of this department is to encourage and develop the small-scale and village industries.

Training-*cum*-Production Centres have been started where the trainees are given monthly stipends. The Centres located in different Blocks of the district are:—

Name of the Training-*cum*-Production Centres.	Place and Block where located.
1. Tailoring Centre ..	Kahra Block.
2. Knitting and Embroidery ..	Sour *bazar*.
3. Ditto ..	Pipra.
4. Leather Goods Production Centre.	Sour *bazar*.
5. Ditto ..	Madhepura.
6. Tailoring Centre ..	Murliganj.
7. Ditto ..	Kumarkhand.
8. Carpentry Centre ..	Chousa.
9. Blacksmithy Centre ..	Uda Kishanganj.
10. Ditto ..	Alamnagar.
11. Electroplating Centre ..	Madhepura.
12. Ladies Tailoring and Cutting Centre.	Kishanpur.
13. Tailoring Centre ..	Supaul.
14 Knitting and Embroidery Centre.	Niwal.
15. Ditto ..	Supaul.
16. Cotton Weaving Centre ..	Supaul.
17. Leather Tanning Centre ..	Singheshwar.
18. Leather Tanning Centre ..	Nirmali.
19 Leather Goods-making Centre	Nauhatta.
20. Carpentry Centre ..	Nirmali.

The Training-*cum*-Production Centres are shifted occasionally according to a phased programme so that the different areas receive the advantages.

SPECIAL LAND ACQUISITION OFFICE.

The office was started in 1954 at Saharsa. The Special Land Acquisition Officer is the administrative head of this office. He is under the direct administrative control of the Director of Rehabilitation and Land Acquisition (River Valley Projects), Patna.

The main function of this department is to acquire lands for Kosi Project at Saharsa.

The statement below shows the unitwise land acquired during 1955-56 to 1962-63:—

Year.	Unit II (Embankment side).	Unit III (Distributaries).	Rehabilitation.
	Acres.	Acres.	Acres.
1955-56	2,282.944	Nil	3.05
1956-57	1,946.077	Nil	Nil
1957-58	3,688.641	Nil	Nil
1958-59	549.218	1,734.37	1,280.75
1959-60	187.045	968.715	621.95
1960-61	14.03	846.998	44.41
1961-62	1.42	454.59	44.61
1962-63	304.86	1,576.169	4.14

PUBLIC HEALTH ENGINEERING.

This department was started in 1953, at Saharsa at a subdivisional level. The Subdivisional Officer, Public Health Engineering, is the head at the district level and he is under the administrative control of the Executive Engineer, Purnea, and the Superintending Engineer, Muzaffarpur. The Chief Engineer, Patna, is the administrative head of the department.

Prior to 1956, this office used to control the water-supply scheme of Madhepura but in 1956, a separate subdivision was started for the requirements of Madhepura.

There are six Sectional Officers out of which three are posted at Saharsa town, one at Supaul, one at Madhepura and one at Singheshwar.

STAMPS.

There is one Treasury Officer of Finance Service at the District Treasury Office. Besides, there are three Sub-Treasury Officers at Supaul, Madhepura and Birpur respectively. These officers are under the direct control of the District Magistrate, Saharsa. The Subdivisional Officers of *Muffasil* subdivisions are the head of the Sub-Treasury Offices.

The revenue from the sale of stamps is an important source of income to the State Government.

The statement below supplied by the Saharsa Treasury Office, shows the receipts from the sale of stamps:—

Year.	Non-judicial. Rs.	Judicial Rs.
1955-56	2,37,038.13	1,95,701.62
1956-57	3,31,878.02	19,53,398.09
1957-58	Not available	Not available.
1958-59	2,65,082.79	13,456.96
1959-60	3,77,863.63	1,66,850.83
1960-61	5,07,331.70	1,80,804.94
1961-62	5,00,657.13	2,03,692.40

The above figures also include the figures of all the Sub-treasury Offices of the district.

PUBLIC RELATIONS DEPARTMENT.

Prior to 1952, the Public Relations Department was known as the Publicity Department. The Public Relations Officer is the head of the department. He is assisted by three Assistant Public Relations Officers with headquarters at Saharsa, Madhepura and Supaul respectively.

The District Public Relations Officer and the Assistant Public Relations Officers are under the immediate control of the District Magistrate. He is also under the Director of Public Relations, Patna. The department is the link between the people and the State Government.

A mobile publicity van equipped with a projector is taken round the district and free film shows and talks are arranged on various useful topics on health, village industries, education, Five-Year Plans, etc. Publicity literature are also distributed. Radio sets have been distributed.

There is an Information Centre at Saharsa where several daily newspapers, magazines, publicity literature, etc., are kept for public consumption. It was observed that the Information Centre was visited by very few persons and could be said to be popular. Information Centres at Block level have been established and supervised by the District Public Relations Officer. Not much use is made of them either.

SUPPLY AND COMMERCE DEPARTMENT.

Supply and Commerce Section or more popularly known as the Price Control Office was opened in every district during the stress of short supply of essential commodities in the Second War Years. The section has continued and is controlled by the Supply and Commerce Department at the Government level in Patna. The District Magistrate is the administrative head and the section works under a District Supply Officer who is helped by several Inspectors. When Saharsa received the status of a sub-district this section was opened.

The District Supply Officer is assisted by three Assistant Supply Officers in the three subdivisions, namely, Saharsa Sadar, Madhepura and Supaul under the administrative control of the respective Sub-divisional Officers. Besides, there are 18 Supply Inspectors in the district at different points, i.e., one at the district headquarters, six at Sadar subdivision, six at Supaul subdivision and five at Madhepura subdivision to supervise the supply of essential commodities like cement, coal, sugar, iron goods, etc., wherever there is scarcity. The main function of the department is to enforce the control orders and to see to the equitable distribution of essential commodities. Licensed dealers and Fair Price Shops in the urban areas are the usual agencies for such distribution.

EMPLOYMENT EXCHANGE.

The Employment Exchange Office is under the charge of the District Employment Officer. The department is under the Labour Department. The administrative head is the State Director of National Employment Service, Patna. There is a Regional Employment Officer with his headquarters at each division. This office is under the Regional Office, Bhagalpur.

The work of the Employment Exchange in the district of Saharsa is looked after by the District Employment Officer who is of gazetted rank and is under the control of the Regional Employment Officer, Bhagalpur.

The chief function of the department is to work as the link between the employer and the unemployed and to find placement for the unemployed The unemployed are expected to register themselves indicating their qualifications and preference for particular job or trade. The entries are categorised and whenever there is a demand from any employer, the Employment Officer sends up the names of the possible candidates. The arrangement does not work well as the employers seldom notify their requirements to the Exchange and there are too many unqualified registered candidates looking for jobs of one and the same type. The placements are very few.

A statement is given below to show the number of applicants registered, placed and number of vacancies notified at the end of each year for six years:—

Year.	Number of applicants at the register at the end of the year.	Number of persons registered during the year.	Total number of persons enrolled.	Vacancies notified.
1	2	3	4	5
1956	557	1,629	2,186	391
1957	246	600	846	75
1958	219	567	766	189
1959	269	996	1,265	118
1960	542	1,803	2,345	207
1961	582	1,544	2,126	312

The statistics above indicate that the Employment Exchange has not been very popular or effective although it is a fact that in a district like Saharsa employment chance is small.

WEIGHTS AND MEASURES.

The District Inspector of Weights and Measures under the control of the District Magistrate runs the Inspectorate of Weights and Measures. The Chief Inspector of Weights and Measures, Patna and the Divisional Inspector, Bhagalpur, are also the superior authority of the District Inspector of Weights and Measures.

The District Inspector is assisted by three Subdivisional Inspectors posted at Sadar, Madhepura and Supaul subdivisions with headquarters at Saharsa. Their duty is to see that correct weights and measures are used. They have the authority to verify the weights and weighing instruments and to prosecute, if necessary. They seize unauthorised weights and measures and educate the public as to the correct weights and measures. Their work has become all the more important owing to the recent changes in the measures by law. A bewildering variety of weights and measures were in use and they differed from place to place.

STATISTICS DEPARTMENT.

The District Statistical Officer is in charge of the Statistics Department at the district level. He is under the administrative control of the District Magistrate and also works under the Directorate of Economics and Statistics, Bihar, Patna. His duty is to collect statistics of various descriptions and also to carry out any sample survey, if ordered. He is expected to watch the weekly progress of the surveys to give the necessary direction to the field staff.

At present (1963) the District Statistical Officer is assisted by the following staff:—

(1) One District Statistical Supervisor posted at Saharsa.

(2) One District Statistical Inspector posted at Saharsa.

(3) One Junior Statistical Assistant posted at Saharsa

(4) Seventeen Junior Statistical Assistants at the different Block headquarters.

(5) Three Junior Field Investigators posted at Saharsa, Uda Kishanganj and Supaul respectively.

This is an important section and can only be useful if properly manned. It has been felt that the District Statistical Officer here has not yet been able to collect reliable data for the district.*

* A lot of unreliable and fantastic statistics had been supplied by this office which had to be returned and rejected. The District Magistrate was informed. The section has yet to find its feet. (P. C. R. C.)

Kosi Project Department.

The Kosi Project Department is under the control of the Chief Administrator of Kosi Project, Bihar, Patna. The work of the department in this district has been described elsewhere.

The Chief Engineer, Kosi Project, is in charge of the execution of the various schemes under Kosi Project. He is assisted by the following principal officers:—

(1) Superintending Engineer, Barrage Circle.

(2) Superintending Engineer, Canal Circle.

(3) Superintending Engineer, Chatra Canal Circle.

(4) Superintending Engineer, Quality Control.

(5) Superintending Engineer, Railways.

(6) Administrative Officer, Birpur.

(7) Executive Engineer, Barrage Division.

(8) Executive Engineer, Quarry Division.

(9) Executive Engineer, Mechanical Division.

(10) Executive Engineer, Earth Dam Division.

(11) Three Executive Engineers one each for Rehabilitation at Raghopur, Nirmali and Madhepura.

(12) Executive Engineer, Chatra Division.

The Canal Division and Barrage Divisions are divided into a number of subdivisions. Each subdivision is under the charge of one Assistant Engineer. There are a large number of Sectional Officers under the immediate control of the Assistant Engineers. There are hundreds of subordinate employees.

Central Government Departments.

Postal Department.

The Postal Department including Telegraphs and Telephones is under the control of the Superintendent of Post Offices with headquarters at Purnea and the Post Master General, Bihar, Patna. For administrative purposes this department has two subdivisions, namely, Saharsa and Madhepura. There are two Postal Inspectors posted at Saharsa and Madhepura respectively.

The Saharsa Post Office is the head post office. There are two types of Sub-post offices, i.e., Departmental and Extra Departmental. The strength of the Departmental Sub-post Offices in the district is seventeen and that of the Extra Departmental is one. In Extra Departmental Sub-post Offices, part-time clerks are appointed. There are 35 Branch Post Offices. The majority of the Sub-post Offices are served direct by rail communication with railway mail service and a few of them are served by roads through mail runners. The Branch Post Offices are located at bigger villages.

The Post Offices are very few in number in consideration of the population and the number of villages. The bad communications have been a problem for efficient postal services.

Life Insurance Corporation

After the nationalisation of Life Insurance work, the Life Insurance Corporation, India, was set up and the Saharsa Branch was sponsored in October, 1958. The Branch Office at Saharsa has one Development Centre at Supaul since July, 1962. There is an Assistant Branch Manager (Development) at Supaul. The Saharsa Branch is under Muzaffarpur Division.

There are fourteen Field Officers in Saharsa Branch out of which three are posted at Saharsa, five at Madhepura and six at Supaul respectively. The Field Officers have a specified area in their charge and they work through appointed village agents. These village agents work on commission basis calculated on the premiums paid on policies.

Central Excise.

There are three Range offices of the Central Excise Department at Saharsa town, Murliganj and Uda Kishanganj respectively. There are Inspectors of Central Excise at each of these places. The Central Excise Inspector is assisted by three Sub-Inspectors, one for each Range. They are under the Inspector of Central Excise at Saharsa who is controlled by the Superintendent of Central Excise, Santal Parganas, and the Assistant Collector of Central Excise, Purnea. The Collector of Central Excise, Patna, is the administrative head of the department.

The chief function of the department is to look after the proper collection of excise duty on commodities like tobacco, non-essential vegetable oil, etc., levied by the Central Government. The district is not of much importance from Central Excise Department point of view.

CHAPTER XI.

REVENUE ADMINISTRATION.

History of Land Revenue Administration and Settlement.

The district of Saharsa was separated from the old district of Bhagalpur from the 1st April 1954. The old history of Land Revenue Administration and Settlements of Saharsa district are the same as that of Bhagalpur which have been discussed in the *District Gazetteer of Bhagalpur* (1962)*.

History of Land Revenue Assessment and Management.

The history of land revenue assessment and management of Saharsa district followed the same pattern as in other districts of Bihar. There is a continuity in this matter from the ancient period to the end of the Mughal and then in the British period. There had been changes and modifications from time to time, but the fundamental features appear to have remained unaltered. The Muslims or even the Britishers did not impose entirely a new system of land revenue assessment and collection. On the other hand they adopted mainly, with some modifications what the time required. The Muslim sovereign not unlike some Hindu kings considered himself as a proprietor of the soil and thought he was entitled to get the whole produce. As such in theory there was no fixity of State demand. But in practice one-third or even half of the total produce was taken as the king's share during the Muslim period.

The assessment of the land revenue was ascertained in consideration of the area and quality of the land. The assessment of Todarmal was based on a fourfold classification of lands such as (*i*) *Polaj* (lands continuously cultivated and never allowed to lie fallow), (*ii*) *Parauti* (land left fallow temporarily to recover its fertility), (*iii*) *Chachar* (land left fallow for three or four years) and (*iv*) *banjar* (land uncultivated for five years or more). Each of the first two classes was subdivided into three grades good, middling and bad, and the average produce was calculated from the mean of the three grades. The classification was determined not by the examination of the soil but on the basis of continuity of cultivation. The revenue fixed in kind was commuted for money payment on the basis of revenue price for the previous ten years. But payment in kind was the general rule.

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* See *Bhagalpur District Gazetteer* by P. C. Roy Chaudhury (pages 652—669).

The Britishers who inherited the prevailing system of assessment adopted it with some modification. Mr. Murphy, the Settlement Officer of Bhagalpur (1902–10), had mentioned the procedure generally adopted in fixing cash rents as follows:—

> "The lands were classified, and where possible, the average rates paid for similar classes of land in the vicinity were ascertained. In many cases this was not possible, as the rates paid bore little or no reference to the class of the land. In such cases the average cash rate paid in the village for all lands was taken. The average annual value of the produce rent realised by the landlord in the previous ten years was also calculated, and the mean between this and the rental calculated at the average rate or rates was taken as a fair rent. As a rule the average annual value of the produce rents was greater than the rent calculated at the prevailing cash rates and hence the landlord generally stood to loose by the commutation. In many of the villages belonging to the Banaili estate, however, the opposite was the case. In these the result of the commutation proceedings was to increase the landlord's income by about 20 per cent. Strange to say that the only objection was raised by the landlords themselves, who were not satisfied and asked for more. The *raiyats* were quite willing to pay the enhanced rents. This is instructive, as it indicates that the persons chiefly interested in the maintenance of the produce rent system are the landlords' servants who find in it unlimited opportunities for blackmail. The manager of this estate is clearly aware of this, for in recent years he has himself commuted the rents of large numbers of holdings. The only objection to commutation through the settlement courts appears to be that the landlord does not get the *salami*, which is usually paid when the commutation is done by private agreement."*

The average cash rates of rent per acre paid by different classes of *raiyats* in old Bhagalpur district including Saharsa were Rs. 1-4-0 for the *raiyats* at fixed rates, Rs. 2-10-6 for the occupancy *raiyats* and Rs. 2-15-3 for the non-occupancy *raiyats*. Thus the incidence of average rent per acre fixed during last Survey and Settlement Operations (1902—10) was Rs. 2-10-5 †

* *Final Report on the Survey and Settlement Operations in the Bhagalpur District* (1902--1910), p. 96, as quoted in the *Bhagalpur District Gazetteer* (1962), p. 665.

† *Ibid*, p. 128.

Besides the cash rent the other form of prevailing rent was produce rent. This was the chief source of the bone of contention between the landlords and the tenants. The total area under produce rent during the last Survey and Settlement Operations was 1,57,073 acres and the incidence of assessment of this type of land was calculated at Rs. 8 per acre.

The last *Survey and Settlement Report* mentions as follows:—

"This shows the average assets to be Rs. 1,662 per square mile or Rs. 2-9-6 per acre. The incidence of Government revenue has been calculated in paragraph 349 to be Rs. 135 per square mile or annas 3 pies 4 per acre.

"The *zamindars* therefore enjoy over 91 per cent of the total assets instead of the 10 per cent which was reserved to them by the permanent settlement. In no other Bihar district is the disproportion between the assets and the revenue so noticeable as in Bhagalpur. The fact that the settlement was made at a time when the greater part of the district was covered with jungle, accounts for this result."*

Later Land Revenue History.

The period which followed the last Survey and Settlement Operations (1902—10) and the publication of the last *District Gazetteer of Bhagalpur* (1911) till the passing of the Bihar Land Reforms Act, 1950, followed practically the same system of land administration as, however, modified according to the various tenancy legislations. According to Mr. Byrne the total land revenue demand of Bhagalpur district in 1911 was Rs. 6,05,746 as against Rs. 6,71,071 in 1954 on the eve of the separation of Saharsa from Bhagalpur district.

There were no temporarily settled estates in the areas forming Saharsa district. The number of permanent settled estates on the eve of the vesting of estates to the State in 1955 was 1,936 in the district. Its net land revenue demand was Rs. 2,32,489 and cess demand Rs. 4,69,421 in 1955.

There were 7 *khasmahal* estates—5 in the Supaul subdivision and one each in Sadar and Madhepura subdivisions during 1954-55. The statement below supplied by Land Reforms Section, Saharsa,

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* *Survey and Settlement Report* (1902—1910), p. 125 as quoted in the *Bhagalpur District Gazetteer* (1962), p. 666.

will show the details of the erstwhile *khasmahal* estates in the district:—

Serial no.	Name of the estates.	Subdivision.	Tauzi no.	Annual.	
				Rent.	Cess.
1	2	3	4	5	6
				Rs.	Rs.
1	Rajanpur	Sadar	3,835	2,603	335
2	Dharampur.. ..	Madhepura	2,781	3,037	380
3	Government Estates of Supaul subdivision—*Khasmahal.*	Supaul	3,973	5,365	392
4	Mansi Piprahi ..	Ditto	3,853	309	19
5	North-Eastern Railway ..	Ditto	Not available	504	Not available.
6	Gidarmari	Ditto	3,854	557	35
7	Ranipatti	Ditto	3,852	520	32

The old distinction between the *khasmahal* estates and the *zamindari* estates has naturally been eliminated with the passing of the Bihar Land Reforms Act, 1950. Now all the estates have vested in the State.

INCOME FROM LAND REVENUE.

Land revenue is the chief source of State income. According to tenancy law rent is the first charge on the land. After the abolition of the *zamindari* system the importance of land revenue as a source of income has increased considerably. The average rent per acre during the last Survey and Settlement Operations (1902—10) was calculated at Rs. 2-9-6. Since then no Cadastral Survey has been conducted in the district. In the absence of a detailed survey it would not be proper to come to any conclusion. But from the figures of current demand of land revenue it appears that there has been a progressive increase in the land revenue of the district. The hitherto *Kabillagan* and *Khas* lands of the ex-landlords which had not been assessed previously have now been assessed except for a small number of pending cases.

The statement of land revenue demand and collection along with cess is given below:—

Year.	Rent.		Cess.	
	Arrear.	Current.	Arrear.	Current.
	Annual Demand.			
	Rs.	Rs.	Rs.	Rs.
1955-56	13,16,050.07	11,85,807.52	1,10,814.73	1,03,106.65
1956-57	10,23,720.32	17,30,523.77	87,041.29	1,34,934.96
1957-58	13,08,496.71	18,37,539.89	1,15,403.63	1,38,185.08
1958-59	31,25,464.42	21,31,777.32	2,40,029.32	1,60,886.39
1959-60	30,25,556.54	24,69,646.55	2,81,330.58	1,90,146.04
1960-61	44,24,633.05	25,68,540.84	3,38,224.36	1,84,576.03
1961-62	42,51,447.74	25,73,799.36	3,29,761.36	1,87,927.44
1962-63	34,91,985.57	20,12,923.21	6,05,256.78	2,01,671.60
	Total Collection Up-to-date.			
1955-56	8,20,870.06	11,46,725.35	64,660.15	85,959.04
1956-57	6,92,344.89	10,63,458.02	52,342.95	77,717.07
1957-58	2,52,979.43	3,80,415.66	18,992.48	28,444.48
1958-59	11,80,271.08	8,32,726.12	87,871.64	60,306.67
1959-60	11,89,172.68	7,59,050.06	90,102.51	56,916.87
1960-61	18,07,588.58	10,24,095.63	1,36,966.95	75,041.79
1961-62	7,00,492 71	5,53,804.15	54,179.73	40,013.00
1962-63	27,92,313.95	12,59,586.46	2,57,500.61	92,004.55

From these tables, it will appear that the current land revenue demand has shown a fluctuating tendency. This is because the current rent demand has yet to be fixed. The rent on all the available *Kabillagan* lands and *Khas* lands of the ex-landlords has not yet been settled. Except in 1962-63, the current land revenue demand has shown a steady increase. The large fall in 1962-63 in the current land revenue demand is reported to have been due to abatements and remissions granted during the period under review. Large areas have had to be acquired for the implementation of Kosi Barrage for the construction of the eastern and western embankments. Abatements and remissions had to be granted for the acquired lands. In 1962-63 a sum of Rs. 7,13,619 was granted towards remission and abatement. The current land revenue demand is expected to go up after the completion of the field *bujharat* operations. The *bujharat* has had to become a lengthy process to find out the actual area in possession of the tenants, the quality, etc., as the

landlords in most cases did not make over detailed revenue papers when the estates were taken over. The remission relates mostly to the 224 villages lying within the two Kosi embankments and they are being ascertained for the period of 1951-52 to 1962-63 from the remission records.

For several reasons the collection of rent in the district for a period of four years, i.e., from 1957-58 to 1959-60 and 1961-62 has been very low. This period coincides with the distribution of relief on a large scale. The reasons for relief have been covered in the section 'Natural Calamities'.

An appreciable amount of rent, i.e., Rs. 27,92,313.95 towards arrear and Rs. 12,59,586.46 towards current has been collected in 1962-63 as a result of the special drive launched in the winter season.

Cess is assessed and realised in accordance with the provisions of the Bengal Cess Act, 1880, as subsequently modified by the rules framed thereunder. Prior to abolition of *zamindaris*, the ex-landlords used to pay cess at the rate of two annas per rupee on the annual value of land. The annual value of some of the estates was, however, considerably reduced as a result of rent commutation operations and Government have, therefore, amended section 37 of the Cess Act by the insertion of section 37-A giving powers to the Collectors to effect reduction in the cess liability of the estate from the date of rent commutation. After abolition, the State Government, in whom the *zamindaris* vested under the Bihar Land Reforms Act, 1950, have to pay cess to the District Board at the same rate. The landlords did not make over their up-to-date land records. Because of this it has not been possible to complete the reduction of cess under section 37-A of the Cess Act and make an accurate estimate of the total annual value of land, and so the total amount of cess payable to the District Board annually has not yet been correctly determined. The State Government are, therefore, making advances to Saharsa District Board along with other District Boards against State liability for payment of cess since 1954-55. The *ad hoc* payment is on the basis of figures of current rent demands. The statement below supplied by the Land Reforms Section, Saharsa, will show the amount of advances made to Saharsa District Board by Government from 1954-55 to 1962-63:—

Years.	Amount in rupees.
1954-55	2,00,000
1955-56	3,17,000
1956-57	3,82,000
1957-58	3,53,800
1958-59	3,71,768
1959-60	3,77,618
1960-61	3,18,572
1961-62	3,71,068
1962-63	2,95,858

Education Cess.

From 1959-60 the State Government have imposed Education Cess at the rate of one anna per rupee on the annual value of land to meet the rising expenditure on education. There has been an enormous expansion of educational institutions. The statement below supplied by Land Reforms Section, Saharsa, will give the figures of the Education Cess during 1959-60 to 1962-63:—

Years.	Demand.		Collection.	
	Arrear.	Current.	Arrear.	Current.
	Rs.	Rs.	Rs.	Rs.
1959-60	1,33,247.41	1,47,420.03	57,427.31	5,127.14
1960-61	1,53,990.81	1,64,553.54	68,597.71	64,720.01
1961-62	1,97,115.20	1,71,623.74	35,418.13	37,055.62
1962-63	3,39,780.12	1,84,720.83	1,53,194.32	85,099.44

Miscellaneous Cess.

The figures for the demand and collection of Miscellaneous Cess for the years 1955-56 to 1962-63 are given below:—

Years.	Demand.		Collection.	
	Arrear.	Current.	Arrear.	Current.
	Rs.	Rs.	Rs.	Rs.
1955-56	18,886.06	1,09,109.04	8,214.45	1,48,017.34
1956-57	38,177.40	2,09,752.23	21,726.56	2,01,412.68
1957-58	35,537.90	1,96,693.75	20,301.96	1,77,593.64
1958-59	74,650.69	2,63,709.41	12,902.46	2,26,657.67
1959-60	1,55,179.53	2,59,925.79	29,120.38	2,34,987.23
1960-61	1,71,130.64	2,47,134.75	11,340.49	1,66,246.12
1961-62	2,28,638.76	3,61,023.46	12,010.54	2,25,004.29
1962-63	2,61,024.88	2,70,349.18	20,319.32	2,87,943.91

Miscellaneous Cess figures include the income from *sairats* such as *hats, bazars, melas, jalkars, pokhars* and ferries.

RELATIONS BETWEEN LANDLORDS AND TENANTS.

Zamindari system was the creation of the Permanent Settlement of 1793. It was not formed on the basis of mutual contract of the two parties. Peculiarly enough the contract was executed by the alien British Government and the few vested privileged people. Since the tenants were not party to this contract they had for ages considered it as an imposition by the third party. As such it was but natural that the relations between the ex-landlords and their tenants remained strained throughout the whole *zamindari* period. Their interest was never common.

The relationship between the landlords and the tenants has been reviewed in the old *District Gazetteer of Bhagalpur* (1911) in the chapter "Rent, Wages and Prices". Long extracts from the reports of the District Magistrate, Mr. F. F. Lyall, for the years 1907-08 and 1908-09 have been given there indicating the bad type of the landlords as a class. Instance of *zamindars* like Rash Bihari Mandal of Madhepura and Maharaja of Sonbarsa in Saharsa district realising much more than what was due as a rent had been given. The *zamindars* have been described as forgerers, robbers and oppressors. The view of Mr. Lyall may be taken to be one-sided and too severe on the landlords. The quotations in the old District Gazetteer from Lyall's reports from 1908-09 also show his veiled contempt for the procedure under which justice was administered either in Civil Courts or in the Criminal Courts. The evils pointed out by Lyall are not peculiar to Saharsa district alone. In a way it may be said that the Permanent Settlement brought in a sort of benevolent despotism between the landlords who had the rights very well protected by law and the tenants who had poverty as a common lot. It is correct that wherever absentee landlordism predominated the troubles of the *raiyats* increased. But the *zamindars* also to a great extent discharged their social obligations.

The administration had tried to keep the balance as far as possible till the *zamindari* abolition was undertaken in 1950 as an aid to bring about a socialistic pattern of society which has been taken up as a policy of the State after independence in 1947. The various agrarian laws that had been put under the statute book either as amendments to the existing tenancy legislation or as new Acts were meant for giving the much needed relief to the tenants. The spread of education, the extension of ideas of Local Self Government and communications, spread of journalism, conclusion of settlement proceedings, etc., were also so many aids to bring about a better relationship.

It could not be expected that with the spread of education the district had in the first two decades of the present century, the tenants would any longer be weakly submitting to the whims and

oppressions of the landlords. There was a considerable friction between the tenants and the management of the Grant's estate and between the Banaili *zamindars* and the tenants. In the third decade of this century the relationship had become very strained. It may be recalled that the Champaran *Satyagraha* of Gandhiji had by then been concluded with success for the *raiyats* who were suffering in the hands of the European Indigo Planters. This event gave a great jolt to the administration, the big *zamindars* and the poor tenants. The tenants were first taught the lesson of unity and there was also a spirit of unrest and lawlessness throughout the country. The agitation in connection with Rowlatt Act, the disturbances in the Punjab, the great stir by the adoption of the Non-co-operation Movement by the Indian National Congress brought a climate that encouraged the *raiyats* to unite and even to take an aggressive attitude. The *diara* disputes, the commutation proceedings and the large number of cases under sections 144 and 145 of the Criminal Procedure Code that took place in the first few years after 1928 are suggestive. The Non-co-operation Movement made the situation more acute. There were riots attended with murder in Mr. Grant's *zamindari*. A survey and preparation of the record-of-rights in the *diara* areas was ordered with a view to the settlement of the disputes. Any Survey and Settlement proceedings are bound to raise more disputes and make the situation tense for some time at least.

In 1922-23 with the advent of the *Kisan Sabha* agitation a new phase began in the relation between the two classes. The *Kisan Sabha* movement under Swami Sahajanand Saraswati and others became vocal throughout Bihar and the grievances of the tenants and the exploitation of their landlords got widespread publication. The *Kisan* Movement spread in Saharsa district also.

The settlement of Alamnagar was completed during 1923-24. In Sonbarsa and the neighbouring villages belonging to Mr. Grant there was no trouble between the *zamindar* and tenants but between one set of tenants and another. In Supaul it was significant that the *zamindar* candidates for the Council were defeated by candidates who professed to represent the *raiyats*.

In 1935-36 the relation between the landlords and tenants entered upon a new phase owing to continued attempts made by the *Kisan Sabha* to ventilate the grievances of the tenants and the high-handedness of the landlords. In the *khasmahals* and in some of the *zamindaris* steps were taken to grant remission in rent. In 1936-37 the *Kisan Sabha* agitation continued to exercise great influence on tenants, encouraging them to resist illegal exactions. The frequent visits of the *Kisan Sabha* leaders kept the agitation alive.

In 1937 the Congress Party formed its Ministry in view of the provincial autonomy of 1935. The Congress Government took some statutory measures to ameliorate the condition of the peasants.

During the first Ministry of the Congress, it became clear that the abolition of the *zamindari* was imminent. The amendments of the Bihar Tenancy Act, 1885, in 1934, 1935 and 1937 were preliminary measures to substantiate the occupancy rights of the *raiyats*.

In 1937-38 the cultivation of *bakast* lands by the landlords which were hitherto usually cultivated by the tenants led to agrarian disputes in some estates of the district. The Bihar Restoration of *Bakast* Lands and Reduction of Arrear of Rent Act, 1938, was passed and the tension averted. In 1938-39 the *raiyats* made wholesale claim over the *bakast* lands and withheld the payment of rent. Commutation Proceedings also received a fillip. The situation remained strained during the whole year, though kept under control by constant vigilance. The policy of double settlement in several cases by the Sonbarsa estate made the situation aggravated in 1939-40.

The relations became all the more strained after the rent reduction operations. During 1940-41 the activities of the *Kisan Sabha* further aggravated the situation. The reappearance of *diara* lands in certain areas revived the old fight between the rival landlords. The *zamindars'* attitude towards their peasants was now largely one of hostility owing to the reduction of rents and restoration of *bakast* lands.

The formation of the Second Congress Ministry in Bihar in 1946 is an event of great historical importance. During the tenure of the First Congress Ministry the abolition of *zamindaris* was mooted and during the Second Congress Ministry it became a State policy. The peasants aspired to release themselves from the yoke of feudal servitude. Besides economic factors, the psychological factors were not less important because of the growing bitterness between the *zamindars* and their tenants. The expansion of education and the free flow of western democratic ideas through the press, printed literature and platforms brought in an intellectual stimulus to have a socialistic pattern of life and administration. The Congress itself had encouraged this idea.

The *zamindari* system with Permanent Settlement was a potent source of the strained relations between the tenants and the landlords. The landlords were encouraged to live a life of ease with very little interest in the tenantry and as such it was the system and not the individuals that really counted as a source of trouble. There are records to show that some of the *zamindars* of the district discharged their social obligations quite well. *Ahars* and *pynes* maintained by some of them had proved the main stay of irrigation. They often remitted a portion of the rentals due and if the tenants were in any difficulties they gave them financial help. Some of the *zamindars* had records of patriotic zeal and had founded schools, colleges, charitable institutions and libraries. Some of the

zamindars had to incur recurring expenditure for the upkeep of the schools and dispensaries they had opened in their *zamindari* areas. After the abolition of *zamindari*, the maintenance of such institutions is the responsibility of the State Government.

TENANCY LAW CHANGES.

The tenants of this district may be classified as tenure-holders, *raiyats* and under-*raiyats*. The *raiyats* hold lands on cash rent and many cultivate lands as *bhawlidars* paying rent in kind. The rights and liabilities of the tenure-holders, *raiyats* and under-*raiyats* have been given in detail in the Bihar Tenancy Act. Before 1934, there was difficulty of transferability of *raiyati* lands. A purchaser of land either by registered sale deed or through court in execution of money decrees was at the mercy of the landlord and their *amlas* who used to recognise the transfer or refuse the same at their sweet will. Exorbitant *salami* used to be charged from the transferees by the landlords for recording recognition to the purchase and for mutating their names. Even after the payment of *salami*, the purchaser had to execute a deed of surrender with respect to the purchased land and then to take a fresh settlement of the same from the landlord at an enhanced rent. It was not unusual for a *salami* of 25 per cent to be charged over the consideration money. In many cases, the purchaser had to loose their lands because of their inability to meet the demands of heavy *salami*.

The *raiyats* also had no right to manufacture bricks or tiles or to excavate tanks or dig wells even for drinking purpose on *raiyati* lands; nor could they erect any building without the consent of the landlord. Consent of the landlord could only be obtained by heavy *salami*, which the *raiyats* could hardly afford.

The lands held by the cultivators were to be found under the following categories:—

(*a*) The *zamindars'* land either *bakast* or *zerat*,

(*b*) Tenants holding lands under the landlords either on their own account or on behalf of the landlords, and

(*c*) Sub-tenants holding lands under the tenants.

In this district it was often the case that in a village the major portion of the land was held by the landlords or some big tenants.

Such big landlords who could not cultivate their land all by themselves had to depend on the system of letting out their lands on *bhawli* or *batai*. While doing so they took care not to settle it permanently. They did not want any evidence to be created in favour of the *bhawlidars* so that they could claim an occupancy right in the lands. *Bhawlidars* were thus mostly at the mercy of the people from whom they held their lands. These landlords or the large cultivators were in the habit of acquiring more lands often

through rent suits and money-suits. Money-lenders also acquired lands when the loanees failed to repay and inducted *bhawlidars* on the land. Many who were the owners of lands in small holdings in the past had fallen in the categories of landless labourers or at best *bhawlidars*. Such cases were common, especially where there had been alluvian and diluvian of the area, several stretches of drought, etc., involving rents and other liabilities of the lands fall into arrears. There were villages in Saharsa district where thousands of acres of lands belonging to the tenants had passed into the hands of persons other than the original tenants who were the actual tillers of the soil.

A number of agrarian laws had to be amended or promulgated. The Bihar Tenancy Amendment Act (8 of 1934) recognised all transfers made before 1923 by sale or gift without a transfer fee and for the succeeding period a fee of 4 per cent over the consideration money was fixed as Landlords' fee. This legislation gave a much-needed relief to the *raiyats* by giving them a statutory right in respect of the use of their lands. The Bihar Tenancy Act was further amended in the year 1938 (Bihar Act II of 1938) during the first Congress Ministry in Bihar. The *raiyats* were given full rights in their lands and henceforward they could use their lands for all legitimate purposes and dispose of the same in a manner they liked without the consent of the landlords. Only a nominal fee or Landlords' fee had to be deposited at the time of the registration of the deed of transfer. A further improvement in the position of the *raiyats* had been brought about by a subsequent insertion of section 23 (*a*) in the Bihar Tenancy Act in 1947. This confers on the occupancy *raiyats*, a right in all trees over their holdings. They can now plant trees and bamboos, cut and appropriate the same. They can now also appropriate the flowers and fruits and other products of the trees. They can also get the rent of trees of any *bhawli* holding converted into cash rent. Any realisation of *tahrir* (illegal gratification or *abwab*) by the landlords or their agents has been made penal. Provision has been made for payment of rent by postal money order and this has practically destroyed the power of the *amlas* (subordinate staff) of the landlords to harass the *raiyats*. All these improvements in the status and the rights of *raiyats* have been brought about by amendment of the Bihar Tenancy Act from time to time.

The right of commutation of produce rent into cash under section 40 of the Bihar Tenancy Act has been a boon to the *raiyats* as the prices of foodgrains in recent years have gone up considerably and it is highly profitable for the *raiyats* to pay rent in cash.

The lot of the under-*raiyats* under the old Tenancy Act was unenviable. They could be evicted from their lands according to the sweet will of the *raiyats* as they enjoyed no statutory rights in the lands cultivated by them. By the amendment in the Bihar

Tenancy Act in 1938, the under-*raiyats* were granted some statutory rights under section 48A of the Act which enabled them to acquire occupancy rights in the lands cultivated by them for 12 years or more continuously. They were subsequently granted the same rights with respect to the trees and bamboos and the use of and succession to and eviction from the lands as an occupancy *raiyat.* The under-*raiyats,* however, now do not have the right to transfer their lands without the consent of their immediate landlords. There is a move, however, to get a Bill passed in the Bihar Legislative Assembly to confer this right on the under-*raiyats.*

The *bataidars* who cultivate the lands of ex-landlords or tenure-holders enjoy certain rights but the position of *bataidars* who cultivate the lands of *raiyats* is very unsafe. They have no statutory rights but there is a proposal to give such *bataidars* also the right of occupancy in the lands cultivated by them. Now that Lands Reforms Act has been brought in force and the *zamindaris* have been taken over by the State, one by one, both the *zamindars* and the tenure-holders have disappeared and there is left only one class of tenants who will cultivate the lands directly under the State.

TRAVERSE SURVEY.

The State Government decided to start traverse survey in unsurveyed areas of Kosi-affected areas in the district during 1957-58, vide letter no. 17-68|55—8. The survey was to be conducted in the entire Kosi-affected areas of the district, but due to financial stringency it was taken up only in two revenue thanas, viz., Pratapganj and Uda-Kishanganj covering about 237 villages. Accordingly, the survey in thana Pratapganj and Uda-Kishanganj covering an area of 419 square miles was taken up in November, 1957 and completed in April, 1958. Sixteen traversers were engaged to expedite the work and a sum of Rs. 1,32,000 was spent over the work.

Besides, stone pillars were embedded at the points of the traverse stations for use during revisional survey. The work of embedding the stone pillars was taken up in May, 1959 and completed in July, 1959. The total cost in embedding of stone pillars replacing pegs of traverse stations in the two thanas was Rs. 3,390.

The following statement supplied by Land Reforms Section, Saharsa, will show the details of stone pillars deposited in different thanas and police-stations in the district:—

(1) Pratapganj thana (Supaul subdivision)	500 stones.
(2) Simrahi police-station (Supaul subdivision).	500 ,,
(3) Karjain police-station (Supaul subdivision).	400 ,,

(4) Uda-Kishanganj thana (Madhepura sub-division).		500	stones.
(5) Alamnagar police-station	..	1,200	„
Total	..	3,100	„

The pillars were stocked at Birpur, Karjain, Raghopur, Pratapganj, Alamnagar, Chousa and Sahsoul.

After traverse survey was made the traverse stations were plotted on the square sheets by the computers after mathematical calculation and checking in Survey Office.

There was a proposal of the State Government to locate the traverse points which were surveyed during 1957-58 on the blue print maps in 1961 and hence traverse points were shown on the blue print maps in 1962 for the revisional survey to be conducted in Saharsa district. The sheets were to be despatched to Saharsa district for being used in the revisional survey in Saharsa district but due to the postponement of Revisional Survey and Settlement Operations the sheets were not supplied. It is understood the postponement was due to financial reasons.

PRESENT SURVEY.

The first Cadastral Survey and Settlement Operations were conducted in Bhagalpur district including Saharsa during 1902—10 by Mr. P. W. Murphy, I. C. S. Since then no survey had been conducted. In the Cadastral Survey the *diara* villages were excluded from the Bengal Tenancy Act Operations, but were topographically surveyed on the 16″ scale under the Survey Act. After 1902 the Kosi *diara* areas in Bhagalpur and Purnea including Saharsa were surveyed with 4″ scale, boundaries were given and were not decided according to possession. This change was made because it was found that the maps of boundaries by possession at the time of their preparation were of little assistance to the courts as possession in *diara* changes rapidly.

Regarding *Kosi Diara* Survey in Saharsa it appears that the final publication was signed by the Survey and Settlement Officer, Bhagalpur, during the years 1929—31. This operation was conducted in the following revenue thanas of the old Bhagalpur district but now in Saharsa district:—

(1) Madhepura, (2) Uda-Kishanganj, (3) Supaul, and (4) Pratapganj.

Prior to this, there was a survey by the Banaili Raj in Saharsa district which was adopted by State Government. The record-of-rights prepared by the Survey and Settlement Officer, Sreenagar and Banaili

Raj estates reveals that the operation was started in 1888 in respect of the villages in the following *parganas* of Saharsa district:—

Name of the parganas.	Name of revenue thana.	Name of the subdivision.
1. Kabkhand	Bangaon ..	Madhepura but now in Saharsa.
2. Uttarkhand	Ditto ..	Ditto.
3. Nishankhpur	Madhepura ..	Madhepura.
4. Dhaphar	Pratapganj ..	Supaul.

The creation of Saharsa, a separate district in 1954, marked an important phase in the old Bhagalpur district. The vesting of all the intermediaries of the district in the State in 1956 marked another important epoch in history of the land revenue administration of the district. The abolition of the *zamindaris* brought direct relation between the Government and tillers of the soil. Since the State Government stepped into the place of the ex-intermediaries the assets and liabilities of the land revenue system now vested in Government. This has necessitated to bring the record-of-rights of each of the tenants up-to-date. This object cannot be achieved without a fresh survey and settlement.

There was a proposal by State Government to conduct Revisional Survey and Settlement in the district. The operations were taken up in March, 1962 but due to financial stringency this was closed in March, 1963.

A brief summary for the Saharsa Survey and Settlement during 1962-63 is as follows:—

The Saharsa Settlement Operations were sanctioned during 1955-56 as a major settlement operation. The area notified, however, was not the entire district but two revenue thanas, namely, Pratapganj and Uda-Kishanganj. Though it was sanctioned as a major operation, the posting of Settlement Officer was delayed and till the appointment of a separate Settlement Officer, the Collector of Saharsa was the *ex-officio* Settlement Officer till February, 1962. The Settlement Officer joined in March, 1962.

Saharsa district, as is well known, has special limitation so far as communication facilities are concerned. The available transport facilities are, by and large, useful only in fair weather with severe handicaps in rainy season. This resulted in considerable difficulties in receiving the consignments in time from Buxar, Bhagalpur and Chaibasa. Within the district also, apart from the paucity of road connection, there are several channels which require ferrying across the vehicle till as late as January every year. The areas notified for survey were more or less lengthwise covering southernmost to northernmost extremities of the district, Birpur being 70 miles north and

Chautsa and Alamnagar being about 70 miles south of Saharsa. The nearest survey area, namely, Sonbarsa was at a distance of 25 miles on extremely *kutcha* road with two crossings for the major portion of the year. There were no vehicles placed under the Settlement Officer for supervision of the work.

Climatic condition of the area particularly the period of rains is relevant for proper and fruitful planning of the field work and the recess work. This region is known for dust storms in the month of May and monsoon breaks soon after. Field work can be done only with extreme difficulty beyond middle of June and from July onwards most of the areas on the outskirts of Saharsa become unapproachable by road. Though from October onwards the communications are restored, some areas remain cut off till as late as December or January and they have to be negotiated with river crossing. All these factors necessitate proper phasing of field work with a bit of staggering. In 1962 the area notification was done from Government level in the last week of May just before the outbreak of rains. There was no staff then except five or six Kanungoes—not all trained in survey. It is understood there was no vehicle and even the minimum essentials for an office organisation like forms, stationery, typewriter, etc., were not received. The A. S. O. headquarters was also not posted nor had the Charge Officer the requisite powers. The blue print maps of a few non-traverse villages only were received which did not cover even a single compact and full Circle. The maps received were of villages scattered over areas of different Circles. Not a single map of the nearest Circle of Sonbarsa was received. Only a few sets of instruments were collected then from Bhagalpur and Chaibasa. There was no camp equipage also. The Deputy Director of Surveys required some time to plot the traverse station on the new maps. No field work therefore could have been possible in the month of June, 1962. The first field season obviously would have been from October-November, 1962. Almost all the preparatory arrangements of collecting camp equipage, camp furniture, forms, maps, instruments, etc., were completed, the staff was being recruited and arrangements at this level were complete to start all the nine Circles covering the two revenue thanas when the Government orders regarding postponement were received.

Probably the postponement of the Settlement Operations as an emergency will be a boon. There is a school of strong opinion that the very character of many of the areas will rapidly change now that the Kosi scheme is largely implemented. Sandy and third rate lands will become second class or even first class with the irrigation facilities. Lands that are now yielding only *marua* or maize will be producing paddy in a few years' time if proper irrigation facilities are available. Certain portions again between the two canals are liable to be flooded and for land revenue purposes will have to be specially treated. This school thinks that the Settlement Operations

now are premature and should be postponed for quite some time to allow the lands to take their shape in the normal manner now that Kosi floods are regimented.*

Bihar Land Reforms Act, 1950.

The Congress Government, after assuming office in this State, took up the question of the abolition of the intermediary interest and wanted to bring the State and the tenants closer. The Permanent Settlement of Lord Cornwallis (1793) had created a class of privileged feudal chiefs and the institution had become worn-out and was almost a dead-weight against the creation of a socialistic State. The agitation launched by the *Kisan Sabha* with the active co-operation of the Congress during the twenties and thirties of the present century had led an acuteness to the problem and had exposed the evils of the *zamindari* system. The abolition of *zamindari* became one of the burning topics of discussion in the press, platform and in the legislature. The *zamindari* system had created a wide hiatus between the tillers of the soil and the landlords and it was found difficult to bridge the gulf. Some of the ameliorative tenancy legislations, viz., commutation of produce rent into cash rent, Bihar Restoration of Bakast Lands and Reduction of Arrear of Rent Act, 1938, passed previously had already curtailed the despotic powers of the landlords and upheld the rights of the tenants, but they were only palliatives. The *zamindari* system had outlived its utility and so its abolition became essential.

There was no precedent to go by and decision had to be taken to decide the conditions under which the various interests of the landlords in their estates and tenures would vest in the State. On the basis of the decision so reached, the Bihar State Acquisition of Zamindaris Bill, 1947, was drafted and introduced in the Legislature. The nomenclature of the Bill was subsequently changed to the Bihar Abolition of Zamindari Bill and passed by Legislature in 1948. The Bill was reserved for the consideration of the Governor-General of India under the provisions of Government of India Act, 1935. After a series of discussions between the Bihar Ministry and the Central Cabinet, the Bill was referred back for amending certain provisions dealing with mineral rights and the amending Bill was accordingly introduced and was passed by the Bihar Legislature in 1949 and thereafter the Bill was again reserved for the consideration of the Governor-General which was obtained in due course and the Bill was published as an Act.

The validity of the Bihar Abolition of Zamindaris Act was challenged by certain landlords and the courts began granting injunctions. Meanwhile, it was felt that the Act did not have sufficient provisions for land reforms and hence it was decided to repeal this legislation and to introduce a more comprehensive one and the Bihar Land Reforms Bill was accordingly introduced in

* Settlement operations have been ordered to be resumed (December, [illegible]).

which provision was made for making over management of estates to *Gram Panchayats*, if the State Government so decided, and for formation of a Land Commission, consisting of both officials and non-officials to advise Government regarding the agrarian policy to be followed. After the Bill was passed by both Houses of Legislature, it was reserved for the assent of the President of India under Article 31 (4) of the Constitution. It received duly the assent of the President and was published as an Act.

The validity of the Bihar Land Reforms Act, 1950, was also challenged in the Patna High Court, which declared that the Act contravened Article 14 of the Constitution and was, therefore, invalid. The State Government considered the matter afresh in consultation with Government of India and it was decided that land reform, being such an important social measure, could not be further delayed on account of controversial legislations and that the Constitution should make a more specific provision so that such legislations could not be challenged. The Bill called the Constitution (First Amendment) Bill, 1951, was accordingly introduced in Parliament by the Prime Minister of India, which *inter alia* provided for certain amendments to Article 31 of the Constitution. The Bill was ultimately passed by the Parliament and was enacted with assent of the President. The Act provided *inter alia* that neither Bihar Land Reforms Act nor any of the provisions thereof would be deemed or even to have become void on the ground that it took away or abridged any of the rights conferred by any provisions of Part III, and notwithstanding any judgement, decree or order of any Court or tribunal contrary, the Act would continue to be enforced.

Some of the landlords challenged the competence of Parliament to amend the Constitution and the Supreme Court issued injunction against taking over the estates under the Bihar Land Reforms Act, 1950, till the validity of the constitutional amendment had been decided. The Supreme Court ultimately rejected the application of the landlords and unanimously held that the constitutional amendment was valid.

Some of the landlords took the matter again to the Supreme Court but the Supreme Court upheld the provisions of the Bihar Land Reforms Act, 1950.

The Bihar Land Reforms Act, 1950, came into force on the 25th September 1950. Steps for taking over the *zamindaris* started from November, 1951, and proceeded according to a phased programme. In the first phase large intermediary interests with a gross annual income exceeding Rs. 50,000 each vested in the State by the issue of individual notifications. According to these notifications 96 intermediary interests with gross annual asset of Rs. 50,000 and more

of Saharsa district vested in the State. The list of these estates is as follows:—

Serial no.	Name of estate.	Number of intermediaries in the State.	Year of vesting.
1	Maharajadhiraj Sir Kameshwar Singh of Raj Darbhanga	1	1951
2	Raja Raghunandan Singh, Monghyr	1	1951
3	Maharaj Sirish Chandra Nandi of Murshidabad ..	1	1951
4	Administrator-General of West Bengal	1	1952
5	Rai Bahadur Rudra Pratap Singh, Raj Sonbarsa ..	3	1952
6	Shri Bhupendra Narain Singh, Baruari Estate ..	2	1952
7	Seven-annas Estates, Baruari..	3	1952
8	Harawat Raj Estate	3	1952
9	Sri Keshav Mohan Thakur, Bhagalpur	3	1952
10	Sri Suraj Mohan Thakur, Bhagalpur	3	1952
11	Sri Naresh Mohan Thakur, Bhagalpur	6	1952
12	Raghunandan Lal Trust	1	1952
13	Kumar Shyama Nand Singh, Banaili	19	1952
14	Kumar Krishna Nand Singh, Banaili	5	1952
15	Pandit Bhim Nath Mishra, Banaili	12	1952
16	Sri Avaya Kumar Sinha and others	9	1952
17	Sri Surendra Mohan Sinha and others	7	1952
18	Sri Sudhindra Narain Sinha and others	14	1952
19	Rani Ramabati and others, Banaili Raj	2	1953
	TOTAL ..	96	

In the second and third phases a good number of estates were vested in the State by individual notifications; immense difficulty was experienced in acquisition of estates by process of individual notifications. The number of smaller intermediary interests in the State was considerably large, and provision was accordingly made in the Bihar Land Reforms (Amendment) Act, 1953 (Bihar Act XX of 1954) for taking over all the estates and tenures within a particular area by issue of a single notification. Accordingly all the remaining estates in Saharsa district were taken over by the State in 1955. There were as many as 10,441 big and small *zamindars* in the district on the eve of *zamindari* abolition.

The Land Reforms Act is the forerunner of other reforms which are on the anvil in connection with the problem of land distribution, fixation of ceiling of agricultural holdings, regulation of rent, co-operative farming, settlement of land with the landless, etc. After the complete abolition of intermediaries, it will naturally be necessary to enact tenancy reforms in order to give full security of tenure to the tenants and to stop the various types of evictions and evictments which may have been perpetrated by the ex-landlords. Some statutory measures as stated before have been taken to stop such evictions.

AGENCY AND MODE OF MANAGEMENT.

As a result of the abolition of the *zamindari*, collection of land revenue has assumed great importance. Prior to the abolition of *zamindaris* in this State except a few *Khasmahal* estates owned by Government there was no revenue establishment of field staff below the subdivisional level. In the *Khasmahal* estates, however, the revenue administration used to be carried on by the Collector with the assistance of a small band of revenue officials, viz., the *Khasmahal* officer, *Kanungo, Khasmahal Tahsildar, Patwari* and *Gorait*, etc. The outgoing landlords and other intermediaries had their own field agency for the management of their estates. On the abolition of *zamindaris*, however, it became imperative on the part of Government to set up an adequate revenue establishment of field and a supervisory staff.

For realisation of rent and other revenue purposes the district has been divided into 210 *halkas*. A *karamchari* has been placed in charge of a *halka*. *Halka* is a unit of ten villages or more. The main duties of the *karamcharis* are collection of rent, maintenance of registers and accounts, submission of reports and returns, maintenance of agricutural statistics, execution of improvement works of vested estates and enquiries relating to mutations, *ad interim* payment and allied work. Several *halkas* make a circle or *anchal*. Above the rank of the *karamchari* is the Circle Inspector, one for each circle or *anchal* who makes detailed supervision over the work of the *Karamcharis*. Both *Karamcharis* and Circle Inspectors are non-gazetted Government servants.

Next in the rank is the Block Development Officer-*cum-Anchal Adhikari*|Circle Officer, one for each block or *anchal* or circle. He is of gazetted rank. In Saharsa district there are 18 blocks-*cum-anchals* and 3 circles. The former is entrusted with both revenue and development work while the latter is confined to revenue work only. They supervise the work of the Circle Inspectors and the *karamcharis*. A Deputy Collector incharge Land Reforms and Development is in charge of land reforms and other allied work in the subdivision, i.e., one each in Sadar, Madhepura and Supaul subdivisions. He is under the general supervision and control of the Subdivisional Officer. An Additional Collector with his headquarters

at Saharsa exercises an over-all supervision and control over the detailed work of revenue administration in the district, subject to over-all control of the Collector of the district and the Commissioner of the Division. At the State level there is the Land Reforms Commissioner who is also the Additional Member of Board of Revenue. The Member, Board of Revenue, is the head of Revenue administration at State level. Thus from the *halka* to the State level there is a network of revenue officers at different levels for revenue work.

There are one Additional Collector, three Deputy Collectors in charge of Land Reforms and Development, 18 Block-*cum-Anchal Adhikaris* and 3 Circle Officers, 21 Circle Inspectors and 216 *Karamcharis* in the district.

Under the proviso to section 13 of the Bihar Land Reforms Act, 1950, *Gram Panchayats* may by general or special order, be entrusted with the management of vested estates and tenures on suitable terms and conditions.

The *Gram Panchayats* have been formed recently and have not yet covered the whole area. *Gram Panchayats* are still in the process of evolution and development and as such it was considered proper to start with the entrustment of rent collection and mutation work only to selected *Gram Panchayats* at the first instance. For this purpose, the *Gram Sevaks* are being trained in rent collection work

The following statement will show the number of *Gram Panchayats* entrusted with rent collection work in Saharsa district —

Year.			Sadar subdivision.	Madhepura subdivision.	Supaul subdivision.	Total.
1956-57	..	..	6	5	1	12
1957-58	..	..	6	5	1	12
1958-59	..	..	6	5	1	12
1959-60	..	..	26	17	13	56
1960-61	..	..	48	63	49	162
1961-62	..	..	62	90	67	219
1962-63	..	..	62	90	67	219

FIELD BUJHARAT OPERATIONS.

The *zamindari* abolition brought in its wake a great volume of revenue work the most important of which is the field *bujharat*. The

field *bujharat* operations were undertaken in 1954 with the object of (1) preparing a reliable rent roll, and (2) collecting information (*a*) for assessment of final compensation, (*b*) for fixation of rent on the *khas* lands of the ex-intermediaries, and (*c*) for settlement of available waste lands with Harijans, Scheduled Tribes and Backward Classes. This task became all the more necessary as the *zamindars* did not make over all their *zamindari* papers like rent roll, etc. On the eve of *zamindari* abolition a large number of settlement and sales had taken place which were left unaccounted for. The local officials had been instructed that as soon as the field *bujharat* of a village is completed, the present total village area and the rental should be compared with the last settlement records, and the difference between the two should be accounted for, that the *khas* lands of the ex-intermediaries as well as other *Kabillagan* land should be assessed to rent and that the continuous *Khatian* and the tenant's ledger should be re-written on the basis of the field *bujharat*. The whole object of the field *bujharat* is thus two-fold, firstly to see that every plot of land in each village is accounted for and the rents due in respect of plots, for which rents are payable, are collected from those who are in possession; the second purpose is to collect the relevant data for assessment of compensation under the Bihar Land Reforms Act, 1950.

According to the prescribed procedure the field *bujharat* work is done villagewise and each *karamchari* is in charge of the operation in his *halka* under the direct control of the Circle Officer or *Anchal Adhikari*. The *bujharat* of the *khatians* in a village is conducted in a serial order, beginning with the first tenant's *khata* having the larger holding. The work covers on examination of (*i*) the Tenant's *Khatian*, (*ii*) the *Bakast Khatian*, (*iii*) *Gairmazrua Malik Khatian*, and (*iv*) *Gairmazrua Am Khatian*.

The field *bujharat* work has been made difficult by the ex-landlords and the tenants to some extent and also because of the flood ravages removing boundaries in many cases and changing the very character of the holdings.

The table supplied by Land Reforms section, Saharsa, will show the Field *bujharat* operation in the district up to 1963—

1. Total number of villages in the district—1,353.

2. Total number of villages in which Field *bujharat*—

   (*i*) Completed by *Karamcharis*—1,336.

   (*ii*) Verified by Circle Inspector—1,285.

   (*iii*) Verified by Anchal Adhikaris—1,171.

3. Progress of disposal of proceedings for assessment of rent under sections 5, 6 and 7 of Bihar Land Reforms Act—

(*i*) Number instituted—5,277.

(*ii*) Number disposed of—4,568.

(*iii*) Area in respect of which rent assessed—13,255.71 acres.

(*iv*) Total rent assessed—Rs. 38,173.50.

4. Progress of assessment of rent on *Kabillagan* lands not coming within the purview of sections 5, 6 and 7 of Bihar Land Reforms Act—

(*i*) Number instituted—8,363.

(*ii*) Number disposed of—8,038.

(*iii*) Area in respect of which rent assessed—5,183.43 acres.

(*iv*) Total rent assessed—Rs. 15,875.61.

5. Progress of commutation of rent—

(*i*) Number instituted—1,408.

(*ii*) Number disposed of—1,168.

(*iii*) Total cash rent fixed—Rs. 3,629.81.

6. *Jamabandi* rent—Rs. 27,25,663.40.

7. Prospective additional rent determined—Rs. 57,678.92.

8. Number of villages of which new combined *Khesra* and plot index prepared—1,163.

9. Number of villages of which new continuous *Khatian* prepared—928.

10. Number of villages of which new tenants' ledger written up—59.

11. Number of villages of which *khewat bujharat completed*—1,281.

12. Number of villages of which combined *khewat* and *khatian* completed—161.

COMPENSATION.

The Land Reforms Act had provision for payment of compensation to the landlords. *Ad interim* payments for the period from the date of vesting to the date of payment of compensation are to be made to the outgoing intermediaries under section 33 of the Bihar Land Reforms Act at 3 per cent per annum of the approximate amount of compensation not exceeding Rs. 50,000 and at 2½ per cent per annum exceeding Rs. 50,000.

The following statement supplied by Land Reforms Section, Saharsa, will show the progress of *ad interim* payments made under section 33 of the Bihar Land Reforms Act, 1950, along with other statements from 1954-55 to 1962-63:—

Year.	Number of compensation case started.	Number of cases in which enquiry has been made. Completed.	Pending.	Number of cases in which *ad interim* payments made.	Number of intermediaries to whom *ad interim* payments made.
1	2	3	4	5	6
1954-55 ..	40	5	35	5	9
1955-56 ..	6,209	1,633	4,576	1,424	779
1956-57 ..	6,209	4,965	1,244	3,259	779
1957-58 ..	6,705	4,668	2,037	4,668	779
1958-59 ..	6,705	4,668	2,037	4,668	779
1959-60 ..	6,705	4,668	2,037	4,668	779
1960-61 ..	*5,113	*2,661	2,452	*2,661	4,544
1961-62 ..	5,113	2,661	2,452	2,661	4,544
1962-63 ..	5,113	2,661	2,452	2,661	4,700

Year.	Total amount of *ad interim* payments made.	Number of persons to whom 50 per cent compensation made.	Total amount of 50 per cent compensation made.	100 per cent compensation paid.
1	7	8	9	10
	Rs.		Rs.	Rs.
1954-55	22,983.19	Nil	Nil	Nil.
1955-56	1,20,000.00	Nil	Nil	Nil.
1956-57	4,98,654.00	Nil	Nil	Nil.
1957-58	5,00,000 00	Nil	Nil	Nil.
1958-59	3,70,884.53	Nil	Nil	Nil.
1959-60	5,00,000.00	Nil	Nil	Nil.
1960-61	4,99,125.48	1,958	†42,73,872.61	Nil.
1961-62	4,10,552.43	413	†9,03,419.72	Nil.
1962-63	4,24,363.34	874	†12,33,180.66	Nil.

* The reduction in the number of compensation cases has happened as a result of amalgamation of some old cases spread over several *anchals*.

† These include the money given in bonds and adjustments made towards outstanding Government dues.

Recent Agrarian Movement (Bhoodan).

The present *Bhoodan* movement which has been launched by Shri Vinoba Bhave, a disciple of Mahatma Gandhi is not purely an agrarian movement but a synthesis of social, economic and mental revolution. It aims to solve the agrarian, social and economic disparity of the nation by peaceful means. Shri Vinoba Bhave wants to bring a sort of parity between 'haves' and 'haves not' by peaceful method. The lands donated in *bhoodan* are settled with the landless agricultural labourers.

To facilitate the *bhoodan* work the Government passed the Bihar *Bhoodan Yagna* Act, 1954, which provides for donation of lands in connection with the *Bhoodan Yagna* initiated by Shri Acharya Vinoba Bhave and settlement of such lands with landless persons. A statutory committee, known as the Bihar *Bhoodan Yagna* Committee, has been established under section 3 of the Act to administer all lands vested in the Committee for the purpose of *Bhoodan Yagna*.

The following statement will show the progress made in the district up to March, 1963:—

(1) Area of land donated for *Bhoodan Yagna* Committee	39,137 acres.
(2) No. of families to whom land was given	6,000
(3) Area of land distributed	10,608 acres.
(4) *Danpatras* filed by the Committee ..	24,847
(5) *Danpatras* confirmed	4,508
(6) *Danpatras* rejected	20,249
(7) *Danpatras* pending	90
(8) Subsidy grant	Rs. 71,804.75 P.
(9) Loan	Rs. 23,963.25 P.

With a view to safeguard the right, title and interest of the *Bhoodan Yagna* Committee in the donated lands instructions were issued to the District Officers, stressing the need for early disposal by the Revenue Officers of the *Danpatras* by confirmation or super session, as the case may be. Secondly, pecuniary help in form of subsidy and loan had been given to holders of *bhoodan* land for purchase of agricultural implements, oxen and seed, etc., for the cultivation of land.

OTHER SOURCES OF REVENUE (SAHARSA).

The table below supplied by Treasury Office, Saharsa, will show the Receipts in the district from 1954-55 to 1962-63:—

Receipts.

Serial no.	Items.	1954-55.	1955-56.	1956-57.
1	2	3	4	5
		Rs.	Rs.	Rs.
1	Central Excise	12,114	21,573	22,118
2	Land Revenue	9,76,143	25,08,688	28,32,121
3	State Excise	3,25,881	2,97,385	4,20,788
4	Stamps	19,62,145	4,24,457	4,63,421
5	Registration	1,25,747	1,55,368	1,80,596
6	Sales Tax	Not available.	Not available.	Not available.
7	Other Taxes and Duties	4,44,442	5,10,365	5,21,931
8	Administration of Justice ..	8,264	16,627	18,321
9	Jails	356	224	321
10	Police	54,724	58,443	61,342
11	Education	10,295	12,312	15,341
12	Medical	35,681	39,363	42,341
13	Public Health	5,100	10,277	11,311
14	Agriculture	13,454	21,433	23,142
15	Animal Husbandry	19,184	21,204	23,109
16	Co-operation	Not available.	Not available.	Not available.
17	Industries	Ditto	Ditto	Ditto.
18	Stationery and Printing	2,234	2,432	2,842
19	Miscellaneous	91,970	1,02,311	1,43,215
20	Extraordinary receipts	4,237	8,542	10,348
21	Interest	80,503	1,01,981	1,41,832
22	Income-tax..	Not available.	Not available.	39,827.12
23	Postal	Ditto	Ditto	7,82,917.32

Receipts—contd.

Serial no.	Items.	1957-58.	1958-59.	1959-60.
1	2	6	7	8
		Rs.	Rs.	Rs.
1	Central Excise	17,979.61	14,113.10	13,747.85
2	Land Revenue	11,29,137.30	20,91,534.17	24,76,947.42
3	State Excise	3,29,086.00	2,95,187.31	3,19,484.00
4	Stamps	5,02,390.64	4,19,117.68	5,38,612.11
5	Registration	2,20,159.00	2,19,916.00	2.08,983.00
6	Sales Tax	5,50,940.00	4,94,468.00	3,95,429.00
7	Other Taxes and Duties ..	7,01,504.76	6,57,728.53	6,30,113.45
8	Administration of Justice ..	21,598.55	11,839.67	13,950.60
9	Jails	552.52	430.04	414.68
10	Police	43,935.57	43,801.36	44,471.33
11	Education	32,472.98	34,279.01	37,203.61
12	Medical	49,687.09	49,227.04	52,312.34
13	Public Health	16,380.27	16,804.36	17,312.41
14	Agriculture	75,963.44	1,49,241.46	1,77,976.72
15	Animal Husbandry ..	21,081.67	27,257.07	25,160.48
16	Co-operation	592.50	1,248.87	1,506.87
17	Industries	2,284.82	2,797.70	4,106.91
18	Stationery and Printing ..	4,554.76	2,537.50	5,531.85
19	Miscellaneous	76,794.20	93,784.56	1,04,351.12
20	Extraordinary receipts ..	32,096.96	36,828.23	42,121.41
21	Interest	1,22,221.58	1,10,028.92	1,10,314.84
22	Income-tax	44,512.47	51,630.28	62,910.87
23	Postal	8,94,819.47	11,53,114.90	17,41,912.[illegible]

Receipts—concld.

Serial no.	Items.	1960-61.	1961-62.	1962-63.
1	2	9	10	11
		Rs.	Rs.	Rs.
1	Central Excise	18,668.77	21,227.48	23,445.19
2	Land Revenue	35,98,205.45	37,48,301.15	39,50,314.33
3	State Excise	3,75,998.24	3,76,125.00	4,14,098.20
4	Stamps	6,70,562.17	6,93,451.29	7,24,138.49
5	Registration	2,59,729.00	3,01,478.00	2,99,165.00
6	Sales Tax	4,90,669.15	5,10,332.24	5,30,418.45
7	Other Taxes and Duties ..	4,18,258.74	4,32,154.18	4,53,121.48
8	Administration of Justice ..	18,282.40	20,101.31	22,301.42
9	Jails	474.19	532.48	612.98
10	Police	51,476.05	53,472.15	54,513.48
11	Education	45,603.06	47,301.76	48,302.18
12	Medical	54,413.47	57,312.01	59,810.04
13	Public Health	17,413.21	19,301.43	20,402.73
14	Agriculture	2,49,893.56	2,51,871.43	2,71,942.19
15	Animal Husbandry ..	23,340.17	24,567.92	26,312.18
16	Co-operation	1,671.86	2,142.14	2,201.41
17	Industries	21,730.69	23,841.09	24,201.31
18	Stationery and Printing ..	3,828.34	4,112.78	4,174.14
19	Miscellaneous	2,98,612.38	3,12,142.19	3,21,421.21
20	Extraordinary receipts ..	25,133.13	27,142.21	29,341.42
21	Interest	1,00,913.72	1,13,421.81	1,24,138.31
22	Income-tax	74,315.43	91,889.39	1,04,556.64
23	Postal	21,03,218.19	32,02,676.38	34,11,201.41

CHAPTER XII.

LAW, ORDER AND JUSTICE.

INCIDENCE OF CRIME.

The district of Saharsa is in close vicinity of Nepal. Criminals from Nepal along with the criminals from the districts of Purnea, Darbhanga and Monghyr in the State of Bihar are responsible for the high incidence of crime in this district. It is easy for the criminals to slip across the borders to Nepal after committing crimes and even if detected, extradition process takes a long time. Besides there are some known gangs that operate in this district. Their names along with the area of their operation are given below:—

Names.		Area of operation.
1. Kari Kunjara Gang	..	Saharsa, Purnea and Nepal.
2. Hazari Chamar Gang	..	Saharsa, Purnea and Nepal.
3. Badri Singh Gang	..	Saharsa and Purnea.
4. Lodhai Chain Gang	..	Saharsa and Purnea.
5. Mahisa Maldahia Gang	..	Saharsa, Purnea and Nepal.
6. Madhukar Chaque Rajpur Gang.		Saharsa and Purnea.
7. Nepal Gang	..	Saharsa, Purnea and Nepal.
8. Kuldip Singh Gang	..	Saharsa, Purnea and Begusarai subdivision of Monghyr district.
9. Kasturi Gorhi Gang	..	Saharsa, Purnea and Monghyr.
10. Ajodhi Mandal's Gang	..	Saharsa and Purnea.
11. Gang of Rajeshwari Criminals.		Saharsa, Purnea and Nepal.
12. Gang of Azim Mian	..	Saharsa, Purnea and Nepal.
13. Mahthaur Criminals	..	Saharsa, Darbhanga and Nepal.

Mahthaur criminals belong to Phulparas police-station in Darbhanga district, Kuldip Singh Gang to Gogri police-station of Monghyr district and Nepal Gang to Nepal. The other gangs have their residence within this district.

The statistics of important crimes from 1952 to 1962 are given below:—

Year.	Murder.	Dacoity.	Robbery.	Burglary.	Theft.	Riot.	Swindling.
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
1952 ..	25	90	19	621	331	216	15
1953 ..	24	65	17	625	253	198	7
1954 ..	25	66	19	665	272	149	19
1955 ..	13	73	32	640	275	193	11
1956 ..	20	48	26	654	244	158	4
1957 ..	14	85	51	889	318	143	5
1958 ..	20	58	36	827	296	107	9
1959 ..	18	32	35	641	237	96	21
1960 ..	15	36	21	597	331	96	10
1961 ..	14	46	19	589	335	178	23
1962 ..	16	40	12	587	324	141	18

Year.	Kidnapping.	Rape.	B. L. case. Under section 109, Cr. P. C.	B. L. case. Under section 110, Cr. P. C.	Cattle theft.	Traffic accident.
1	9	10	11	12	13	14
1952 ..	5	3	19	2	11	6
1953 ..	7	3	36	10	22	3
1954 ..	5	4	26	24	30	7
1955 ..	6	3	20	66	28	13
1956 ..	4	2	40	69	19	16
1957 ..	3	3	46	21	23	26
1958 ..	5	1	70	41	36	13
1959 ..	9	1	91	35	31	28
1960 ..	9	1	67	14	38	19
1961 ..	12	5	60	21	32	30
1962 ..	4	2	71	10	29	30

The years 1952 and 1957 appear to be the peak period in almost all forms of crimes, the main reasons being the continuous high price of commodities and drought resulting in failure of crops.

Riots are mostly associated with land disputes. As this district is adjacent to Nepal, the incidence of smuggling cases is very high. Smuggling cases mostly refer to the bringing in duty-free Nepali intoxicants. The figures of such cases for the last four years are given below:—

Year.	Smuggling of Nepali *Ganja*.	Nepali liquor.	*Ganja* plantation.	Wild *bhang*.	*Tari*.	Country spirit.	Opium.	Miscellaneous.	Total.
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
1959-60	62	4	1	..	..	..	..	..	67
1960-61	43	3	1	6	1	..	..	..	54
1961-62	62	14	1	9	..	..	1	2	89
1962-63	86	9	1	2	5	1	..	.	104

Patrolling on the border areas is not very effective as the rise in the figures for smuggling of Nepali *ganja* will show.

Burglary and theft are easy to commit as the houses are of rather flimsy construction and the Kosi ravages bring in destitution which often led to anti-social activities.

The table below gives the number of cognizable offences reported, number of convictions and acquittals, etc., from 1952 to 1962:—

Year.			Total number of cognizable offences reported.	Conviction.	Acquittal.	Total number of cases pending with the courts at the end of the year.
1952	..	..	1,746	252	253	616
1953	..	..	1,529	175	325	561
1954	..	..	1,567	242	194	444
1955	..	..	1,586	220	170	406
1956	..	..	1,532	225	179	396
1957	..	..	1,991	200	171	657
1958	..	..	1,742	291	337	470
1959	..	..	1,423	229	182	441
1960	..	..	1,461	182	167	512
1961	..	..	1,570	78	207	672
1962	..	..	1,508	150	260	723

The above figures indicate that the number of cases pending in the court is fairly large. The number of acquittals is also not meagre. The distance of many of the villages from the police thanas, bad communications, etc., stand on the way of proper investigations.

The anti-social elements are not confined to any particular class or caste. Criminals are to be found among the Dusadh, Gonrhi and Goala castes. Dusadh criminals of Maheshpur, Gonrhi criminals of Alamnagar and Goala criminals of Singheshwar are notorious. Some Rajputs of Kishanganj and Brahmanas of Chhatapur are also among the anti-social elements. Most of the crimes are committed in the areas of Tribeniganj and Chhatapur police-stations in Supaul subdivision and Alamnagar, Kishanganj and Murliganj police-stations in Madhepura subdivision. These areas have very poor communication which becomes worse during the rains and so the criminals find it easy to escape. There are still certain parts of the district which become almost inaccessible during the rainy season. Post-mortem examination is useful only if done soon. It will be quite a few days to take a dead body to the hospitals from distant parts of the district. Post-mortem examination of a highly decomposed body has very little results.

ORGANISATION OF POLICE FORCE.

As this district was a part of Bhagalpur district till March, 1954, the early history about the police organisation in this area is to be traced in the literature on Bhagalpur district.

The police organisation in 1872 in this area as mentioned by W. W. Hunter was as follows*:—

Subdivision.	Police Circle (Thana).	Area (in sq. miles).	Population.
Madhepura	Kishanganj	369	1,39,403
	Madhepura	503	2,51,683
Supaul	Supaul	574	2,79,102
	Bangaon	263	1,45,088
	Pratapganj	438	1,41,557

He further mentions that the police staff of each police circle (thana) in the same year was as follows:—

1. Madhepura—1 Inspector, 1 Sub-Inspector, 2 Head Constables and 16 Constables.
2. Kishanganj—1 Sub-Inspector, 2 Head Constables and 12 Constables.
3. Supaul—1 Inspector, 1 Sub-Inspector, 2 Head Constables and 16 Constables.
4. Bangaon—2 Head Constables and 8 Constables.
5. Pratapganj—1 Sub-Inspector, 1 Head Constable and 10 Constables.

* *Statistical Account of Bengal* by *W. W. Hunter*, volume XIV, districts of Bhagalpur and the Santal Parganas, pages 46, 288-289.

As it appears from the description of Hunter, there were two frontier posts—one at Dagmara and the other at Bhimnagar. There were one Head Constable and 6 Constables stationed at each of the frontier posts on the Nepal boundary.

It is further mentioned that in 1870-71 there was a regular police of 11 officers and 39 men and a rural police or village watch of 687 in Madhepura subdivision. The total cost of administration of police and *Chowkidars* was £ 3,848, 3s.

By 1911 there had been a large expansion of the force.

The table below shows the thanas and police-stations included in each thana and the number of *Chowkidars* and *Dafadars* employed in each police-station in 1911*:—

Name of thana.	Name of police-station under each thana.	Number of *Chowkidars*.	*Dafadars*.
Madhepura..	Madhepura..	322	17
	Mirganj ..	122	7
Bangaon ..	Bangaon ..	219	11
Kishanganj..	Kishanganj..	205	11
Supaul ..	Supaul ..	393	20
	Dagmara ..	111	6
	Daparkha ..	100	5
Pratapganj..	Pratapganj..	183	10
	Bhimnagar ..	84	5

The area of each thana as mentioned in the *Bhagalpur District Gazetteer*, 1911, was as follows†:—

Subdivision.	Thana.	Area (sq. miles.)
Madhepura..	(1) Madhepura	547
	(2) Bangaon	263
	(3) Kishanganj	366
Supaul ..	(1) Supaul ..	593
	(2) Pratapganj	341

The Bhagalpur District Gazetteer (1911),** mentions that Dagmara, Daparkha and Bhimnagar were independent out-posts, but *Bhagalpur District Gazetteer Statistics*, 1900-1901 to 1910—1911, mentions them as police-stations. The materials for *Bhagalpur District Gazetteer*, by J. Byrne, were collected up to 1909-10 while *Bhagalpur District Gazetteer Statistics*, 1900-01 to 1910-11, deals with the figures up to 1911. So it might be possible that Dagmara, Daparkha and Bhimnagar were independent outposts prior to 1910-11 and got the status of polce-stations in 1910-11.

* *Bhagalpur District Gazetteer* Statistics, 1900-1901 to 1910-1911 (published in 1915), page 24.

† *Bhagalpur District Gazetteer* 1911, by J. Byrne, page 147.

** *Bhagalpur District Gazetteer* 1911, page 147.

There had been no change in the number of thanas from 1870-71 to 1911. The only change was that Bangaon thana that was under the Supaul subdvision in 1872, came under the Madhepura subdivision in 1911. The result was that the total number of thanas in the Madhepura subdivision became three in 1911 as against two in 1872 and the number of thanas in Supaul subdivision came down to two in 1911 in place of three in 1872.

Saharsa got the status of a sub-district in 1944 and that of a district in 1954. The Police Force in 1945 and 1955 were as follows:—

	1945.		1955.	
	Sanctioned strength on the 31st December.	Actual strength on the 31st December.	Sanctioned strength on the 31st December.	Actual strength on the 31st December.
	Officers.			
Inspector	4	3	16	17
Sergeant-Major	1	1	1	1
Sub-Inspector	34	26	19	6
Sergeant	1	..	1	1
Total ..	40	30	37	25
	Men.			
Assistant Sub-Inspector ..	34	22	30	30
Havildars	10	10	12	11
Constables	384	382	401	383
Total ..	428	414	443	424

The number of *Dafadars* and *Chowkidars* were 56 and 1,121 respectively in 1945 and 104 and 1,239 respectively in 1955. Before the creation of Saharsa sub-district, Bangaon police-station under the Madhepura subdivision, had jurisdiction over the area now known as Saharsa town. When the sub-district started functioning, an out-post was set up at Saharsa within the jurisdiction of Bangaon police-station. After the creation of the district in 1954, Bangaon police-station with its jurisdiction was shifted to Saharsa and it was renamed as Saharsa police-station. In 1962, the jurisdiction of Saharsa and Dharhara police-stations was split up into three police-stations, namely, Saharsa, Bangaon and Nauhatta. In 1962, the area of Alamnagar police-station was subdivided into two police-stations, namely, Alamnagar and Chousa.

The sanctioned strength of the Police Force in 1962 was 1 Superintendent, 4 Deputy Superintendents, 55 Officers (consisting of 15 Inspectors, 1 Sergeant-Major, 34 Sub-Inspectors, 2 Assistant District Prosecutors and 1 Sergeant) and 467 men.

The police organisation is headed by the Superintendent of Police with headquarters at Saharsa.

He is under the administrative control of the Deputy Inspector-General of Police, Bhagalpur and the Inspector-General of Police Bihar, Patna. The Superintendent of Police is assisted by one Deputy Superintendent of Police in the office at the district level and three other Deputy Superintendents of Police posted in the three Circles. There are two District Prosecutors (one at Saharsa and the other at Madhepura) and two Assistant Prosecutors. They serve as the liaison between the Magistracy and the Police administration of the district.

There are eighteen police-stations and nine outposts in the district. For the police administration the district is divided into three Circles, namely, Kishanganj, Supaul and Madhepura, each having several police-stations and outposts. The police-stations and outposts are as follows:—

(*i*) Sadar subdivision—Saharsa, Bangaon, Nauhatta, Sonbarsa and Sourbazar police-stations. There is no outpost in this subdivision.

(*ii*) Supaul subdivision—Supaul, Nirmali, Kishanpur, Birpur, Chhatapur, Raghopur and Tribeniganj police-stations; Kunauli and Bhaptiahi outpost under Nirmali police-station, Bhimnagar outposts under Chhatapur police-station, Karjain outpost under Raghopur police-station and Jadia outpost under Tribeniganj police-station.

(*iii*) Madhepura subdivision—Madhepura, Singheshwar, Murliganj, Kishanganj, Alamnagar and Chousa police-stations, Bharrahi outpost in Madhepura police-station, Bihariganj outpost in Kishanganj police-station and Puraini outpost in Alamnagar police-station.

Previously a police-station was put under the charge of a Sub-Inspector of Police. But according to the Reorganisation Scheme which came into operation with effect from 15th July 1953 in the district, all police-stations except Nauhatta, Bangaon, Singheshwar, Chausa and Kishanpur police-stations have been placed in the charge of Inspectors and the Circles have been placed in the charge of Deputy Superintendents of Police. This has been done as an experimental measure for improving the tone of police administration. Thirteen police-stations are under the charge of Inspectors and five police-stations as mentioned above are under the charge of Sub-Inspectors. Each police-station has generally one Inspector of Police (Officer Incharge) and one Sub-Inspector of Police, one Assistant Sub-Inspector of Police, one Writer Constable and eight constables. But the strength varies according to the size and needs of police-stations.

Each of the outposts is under the direct control of the officer in charge of the police-station concerned and is manned by Sub-Inspectors or Assistant Sub-Inspectors according to the necessity and volume of work of the outposts. For the rural areas in 1962 the sanctioned strength of *Dafadars* and *Chowkidars* is 104 and 1,237 respectively.

There are some ancillary establishments to help the regular police force. They are—(1) *Anchal* Force, (2) Home Guards, (3) Village Volunteer Force and Village Resistance Groups.

(1) *Anchal Force.*—This Force was organised in 1956 mainly for the purpose of guarding and escorting Government revenues entrusted to the Block Development Officers. The strength of the Force is likely to increase with more of Blocks coming into operation. At present the Force consists of one Sergeant, one Sub-Inspector, one Jamadar, two Assistant Sub-Inspectors, nineteen Havildars and 132 Constables including 18 Leave and Reserve Constables. The unit for each *Anchal* consists of one Havildar and six Constables.

(2) *Home Guards.*—This Force was organised in 1948 with a view to helping the administration in various aspects specially the Police Department for patrolling the crime-affected areas and also for the prevention of crimes and maintenance of law and order. Their services may be useful in case of any emergency arising in and out of the district also. There are 236 Home Guards as against the sanctioned strength of 234 in the district. Till May, 1963, seven hundred and four persons were given the training and seven persons are under training. This Force acts as auxiliary to the regular police force.

(3) *Village Resistance Groups* were formed out of the members of the public for the purpose of patrolling and to control dacoity. The villagers were exhorted to organise themselves into a disciplined body and to enrol themselves as volunteers. The Force consists of 1,999 persons in the district. In addition to this the *Panchayats* have also organised Village Volunteer Force—the details of which have been given in the chapter "Local Self-Government". They are also to act with the regular and rural police for the purpose of law, order and crime measures.

Government Railway Police.

There is no Government Railway police-station or outpost in this district. The Government Railway Police at Katihar and Khagaria have their jurisdiction.

Anti-Corruption Squad.

A separate Anti-corruption unit has not as yet (May, 1963) been formed. However, an Anti-corruption unit is functioning at Purnea under a Deputy Superintendent of Police whose jurisdiction also covers Saharsa district.

District Crime Bureau.

The District Crime Bureau is functioning from 1st April 1955. The Bureau, under the Crime Investigation Department consists of one Inspector, two Sub-Inspectors, two Writer Constables and one Constable. Their main duty is to maintain records of the criminal gangs operating within and outside the district and to help the regular police force in investigation and crime control work.

JAILS AND LOCK-UPS.

Previously there were only two subsidiary jails, one at Madhepura and the other at Supaul. *Bhagalpur District Gazetteer* (1911) has mentioned about sub-jails as follows:—

"At Supaul and Madhepura there are subsidiary jails in which accused persons are kept while awaiting trial if they are not released on bail, and short-term prisoners (sentenced to not more than fourteen years' imprisonment) are kept to serve out their sentences. Oil-pressing and grain-grinding are the industries carried on in the subsidiary jails*". W. W. Hunter mentions that Madhepura subdivision was formed on the 3rd September 1845 and Supaul subdivision in November, 1870†. It may be surmised that the subsidiary jails were established in the years when the respective subdivisions were created or soon after. With the creation of Saharsa district in 1954, Supaul and Madhepura Subsidiary Jails came within the jurisdiction of this district.

With Saharsa as a district a subsidiary jail at Saharsa started functioning with effect from 1st April, 1954. Saharsa Subsidiary Jail has been upgraded to the status of a District Jail on 1st March, 1963.

The District Jail at Saharsa is at present functioning under the Civil Surgeon who is the part-time Superintendent of the Jail. Each subsidiary jail is under the charge of a part-time Superintendent of Jail who is the Civil Assistant Surgeon of the respective subdivisional hospital. In addition to a part-time Superintendent there are one Assistant Jailor, one Head Warder, six Warders and one part-time Dresser in Supaul Subsidiary Jail; and one Assistant Jailor, two Head Warders, eight Warders and one Dresser in Madhepura Subsidiary Jail.

At present (July, 1963), the sanctioned staff of the Saharsa District Jail consists of one part-time Superintendent (Civil Surgeon), one Jailor, two Assistant Jailors, one Medical Officer (Sub-Assistant Surgeon), one Compounder, six Head Warders and twenty-five Warders. The sanctioned capacity of accommodation in the District Jail is for 390 persons.

* *Bhagalpur District Gazetteer* by J. Byrne, page 148.

† W. W. Hunter: *Statistical Account of Bengal*, volume XIV, pages 288-289.

The sanctioned capacity of the jails in 1962 was as follows:—

	Males.	Females.	Total.
Subsidiary Jail, Saharsa ..	30	14	44
Subsidiary Jail, Madhepura	60	9	69
Subsidiary Jail, Supaul ..	36	5	41

The following are the figures of the prisoners in the jails on the 31st December, 1960:—

Jail.	Males.	Females.
Saharsa sub-jail ..	32	..
Madhepura sub-jail ..	67	2
Supaul sub-jail ..	87	1

Prison Discipline and Welfare.

Discipline is maintained in accordance with the Jail Regulations. In the subsidiary jails generally under-trials and sessions prisoners are kept and they are transferred to Bhagalpur Jail when they are convicted. Only very short-term convicts are lodged in the subsidiary jails. Both Madhepura and Supaul Subsidiary Jails have a library.

PROBATION DEPARTMENT.

Bihar was the first State in India to bring into force the Central Legislation on probation, namely, the Probation of Offenders Act, 1958 (Act XX of 1958), on the 15th June 1959.

The special features of the Probation of Offenders Act, 1958, are as follows:—

(1) (*a*) Courts have been given the power to place any offender on probation who is found guilty of having committed any offence not punishable with death or imprisonment for life, provided, in the circumstances of the case including the nature of the offence and the character of the offender such course is considered expedient by the court.

(*b*) Restrictions on the use of probation based on age, sex and previous conviction as contained in section 562, Cr. P. C., have been placed.

(2) The Act provides a regular machinery for enquiry into the personality, character and home surroundings of the offender, which is to assist the court in determining the suitable method of dealing with him.

(3) It has provision for a special machinery to supervise the conduct of the probationers as well as to advise and assist them while on probation.

(4) It allows the release of an offender under certain conditions.

(5) It makes a probation enquiry mandatory in the cases of offenders below 21 years of age, where the provisions of the Act are applicable.

The main idea is not to allow the first offenders to be vitiated by the usual atmosphere of a jail but to try and rehabilitate them if possible.

Organisational Set-up.

The District Probation Office at Saharsa has been functioning since 15th June 1959. The staff consists of one Probation Officer and one Assistant Probation Officer. They work under the control of the Principal Probation Officer who is also the Superintendent of Central Jail, Bhagalpur. His jurisdiction as the Principal Probation Officer extends over both Bhagalpur and Saharsa districts.

Functions.

The number of cases referred to the Probation Officer from the beginning up to June, 1963 came to 234 excluding 45 parole cases. Most of the reported cases relate to theft, hurt, rioting and dishonestly receiving stolen property. The number of offenders released on probation till now without supervision is 45 and with supervision is 32.

Probation system appears to have made very little headway although the system has been operating for the last four years. The initiative lies with the Magistrates.

Duties of a Probation Officer.

A Probation Officer has to perform the following duties as defined in section 14 of the Probation of Offenders Act, 1958:—

(*a*) to enquire in accordance with any direction of court, into circumstances or home surroundings of any person accused of an offence, with a view to assist the court in determining the most suitable method of dealing with him and to submit reports to the court;

(*b*) to supervise probationers and other persons placed under his supervision and where necessary to endeavour to find out suitable employment for them;

(*c*) to advise and assist an offender in the payment of compensation or costs ordered by the court;

(*d*) to advise and assist, in such cases and in such manner as may be prescribed, persons who have been released under section 4 of the Act; and

(*e*) to perform such other duties as may be prescribed.

CIVIL AND CRIMINAL JUSTICE.

Historical Background.

As Saharsa formed a part of Bhagalpur district till 1954 the historical background of the system for Civil and Criminal Justice will be found in the re-written *District Gazetteer of Bhagalpur**.

There is no separate judgeship for Saharsa district, but one is in the offing. The Civil and Criminal Courts of this place are still within the Bhagalpur judgeship. The authority to exercise general control over the Civil Courts along with their establishments and to inspect the proceedings of the courts is vested in the District Judge, Bhagalpur.

CIVIL JUSTICE.

The Civil Courts of this district subordinate to the District Judge of Bhagalpur comprise one Subordinate Judge and one permanent Munsif's Court at Madhepura.

The Civil Courts at Madhepura have jurisdiction over the entire district of Saharsa. The exact year when the Munsifi Court started functioning could not be ascertained. It may be inferred that the court might have started functioning soon after 1845 when Madhepura subdivision was formed. It appears from the old records that the court of the Munsif was previously functioning at Kishanganj and the Lieutenant-Governor ordered the transfer of the Kishanganj Munsif's Court to Madhepura, vide letter no. 3959, from the Secretary to the Government of Bengal, dated Fort William, the 19th June 1865. The Judge of Bhagalpur, vide his letter no. 287, dated Bhagalpur, the 23rd December 1865, addressed to the Commissioner, Bhagalpur, requested for sanctioning a sum of Rs. 150 for the erection of a *kutchery* house at Madhepura for the Munsif of Kishanganj.

The Subordinate Judge's Court at Madhepura was created, vide Government notification no. J-45|43–312-JR, dated the 11th October 1944 and it started functioning with effect from 1st November 1944 with its jurisdiction over the then Madhepura and Supaul subdivisions. Its jurisdiction was extended to Saharsa subdivision when it was formed in 1954.

There has been a persistent move from the public to have at least the court of an Additional District and Sessions Judge at Saharsa. The reasons are that all criminal appeals arising from the decisions of the Magistrates with First Class powers have to be filed and determined by the Sessions Judge at Bhagalpur and the same is the case with all the civil appeals. Because of bad communications specially during the monsoon one avoids filing appeals and most of the appeals which are filed are decided *ex parte*. There was an application to the Chief Justice of the Patna High Court indicating these grievances in July, 1949.

* *Bhagalpur District Gazetteer* (1962), pages 48, 56, 425—428.

The number of civil suits from 1870 to 1879, will be of some interest. The table given below shows the total number of civil suits instituted, and disposed of from 1870 to 1879:*—

Year.	Number of suits instituted.	Number of suits disposed of.	Number of suits pending
1870	1,210	1,132	215
1871	1,252	1,288	217
1872	1,171	906	453
1873	1,625	2,041	55
1874	1,514	1,534	34
1875	1,803	1,609	136
1876	1,634	1,667	103
1877	1,712	1,703	112
1878	2,371	2,368	122
1879	2,360	2,375	113

The reasons for the absence of any marked increase in civil litigation in contrast to the other districts may be attributed to the poor economic condition of the people of the district due to the Kosi ravages and bad communications. The District Judgeship is located at Bhagalpur and the only Civil Court is at Madhepura. There are some parts of Supaul and Saharsa subdivisions which are at a great distance from both the places (Madhepura and Bhagalpur) and have bad communications for most part of the year. An instance is the area under Nirmali police-station of Supaul subdivision. The communication between Supaul and Nirmali is not direct and the people have to come to Supaul or Madhepura *via* Sakri Samastipur (falling under Darbhanga district) and Mansi (Monghyr district) Railway Stations. This long route means heavy expenditure on travelling and loss of a good deal of time So the people of Nirmali and other distant places of the district hesitate to institute cases either at Madhepura or at Bhagalpur.

Criminal Justice.

The courts of the Subdivisional Officers at Madhepura and Supaul were established in 1845 and 1870 respectively. Mr W. W. Hunter mentions that in 1870-71, there was one Magisterial and Revenue Court for Madhepura subdivision and one Magisterial and Revenue Court for Supaul subdivision.† Although Saharsa is

* *Reports of Civil Administration* of the concerning years for Bhagalpur district.

† W. W. Hunter: *A Statistical Account of Bengal*, Vol. XIV, pages 288-289.

district since 1954 with a District Magistrate, the District and Sessions Judge, Bhagalpur, has jurisdiction over this district for criminal and civil justice till now (1963).

Before 1st July, 1957 criminal cases were tried at the first instance by the Magistrates either of Bihar Civil Service or Subordinate Civil Service commonly known as Deputy and Sub-Deputy Magistrates. They used to be vested by the Government with criminal powers as First, Second or Third Class Magistrates. They were under the control of the District Magistrate. These officers were also empowered to hold preliminary enquiry in cases triable by the Court of Sessions and commit them to Sessions Courts. Appeals from the decisions of Second and Third Class Magistrates were heard by the District Magistrate or some other Magistrates specially empowered to hear appeals and appeals from the decisions of the First Class Magistrates were heard by the District Judge or the Additional District Judges could be taken up in revision or review to the Hon'ble Patna High Court. Under the above set-up there was a fusion of the executive and judicial functions in the District Magistrate and Deputy Magistrates.

The separation of the Judiciary from the Executive was a constant demand. It was the general view that a person who has to carry on executive functions may not always be in a position to do full justice to his judicial work and may not be able to inspire confidence in the public that justice is being done. Article 50 of the Indian Constitution also gave the directive for separation of the Judiciary from the Executive. The matter was enquired into at the State level. It was on the 1st July 1957, that the separation of the judicial and executive functions was carried out in Bhagalpur Judgeship which comprises Saharsa as well. Since then the Judicial Magistrates posted in Saharsa district have been put under the District Judge, Bhagalpur, while the Magistrates functioning as only Executive Officers have been put under the District Magistrate, Saharsa.

There are broadly two categories of criminal cases; one under the provisions of the Indian Penal Code and the other under different local and special Acts such as the Police Act, Indian Railways Act, Cattle Trespass Act, Cruelty to Animals Act, Epidemic Diseases Act, Motor Vehicles Act, Payment of Wages Act, Municipal Act, Payment of Minimum Wages Act, Bihar Sales Tax Act, etc., and preventive sections of Criminal Procedure Code, such as sections 144, 145, 107 and 110 Munsif-Magistrates have been empowered to try criminal cases under the Indian Penal Code and offences under the second category still continue to be dealt with by the Magistrates on the executive side. The figures of the cases

Courts of Judicial Magistrates. Munsif Magistrates in adequate number have been posted in each subdivision. The District Sessions Judge now supplies the staff of these Courts.

STATISTICS OF CIVIL COURTS.

The table below shows the annual number of civil suits and cases instituted and disposed of under different heads from 1952 to 1962. The figures indicate the totals of the suits and cases filed to and disposed of by both the Munsif and the Subordinate Judge, Madhepura. The figures have been compiled from the reports of the Munsif and the Sub-judge, Madhepura, on the administration of civil justice in the concerning years.

Year.	Civil Suits.							
	Institution.				Disposal.			
	S. C. C. suits.	Money suits.	Title suits.	Rent suits.	S. C. C. suits.	Money suits.	Title suits.	Rent suits.
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
1952 ..	141	203	233	2,542	91	255	211	2,252
1953 ..	195	251	101	2,310	254	226	150	2,892
1954 ..	215	291	163	2,640	202	200	125	2,331
1955 ..	142	229	156	2,051	164	230	113	2,164
1956 ..	152	231	205	814	119	173	114	1,231
1957 ..	166	89	159	444	200	146	141	610
1958 ..	290	96	179	114	295	132	197	149
1959 ..	242	117	182	21	236	106	166	30
1960 ..	235	94	212	12	245	105	160	12
1961 ..	323	84	306	21	276	76	171	21
1962 ..	248	48	287	16	279	72	207	16

Year.	Civil Suits.				Execution cases.			Miscellaneous cases.		
	Pending.									
	S.C.C. suits.	Money suits.	Title suits.	Rent suits.	Institution.	Disposal.	Pending.	Institution.	Disposal.	Pending.
1	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19
1952 ..	119	210	357	1,119	900	1,172	1,021	246	368	134
1953 ..	61	152	192	557	900	896	1,030	226	227	122
1954 ..	75	228	233	845	890	797	1,125	243	240	130
1955 ..	54	187	221	710	1,309	1,024	1,443	298	277	122
1956 ..	80	202	256	231	1,679	1,016	1,810	284	283	117
1957 ..	58	92	183	47	1,346	1,469	1,698	263	316	75
1958 ..	55	84	183	14	1,208	1,349	1,570	246	278	69
1959 ..	64	83	189	7	944	1,723	814	287	248	102
1960 ..	61	78	253	9	530	839	522	231	229	112
1961 ..	144	91	397	10	507	504	530	277	254	146
1962 ..	114	71	483	10	259	403	387	261	221	181

The table below shows the civil and miscellaneous appeals filed before and disposed of by the Sub-Judge, Madhepura, from 1953 to 1962:—

Year.	Civil appeals.			Miscellaneous appeals.		
	Total number of appeals for disposal.	Number of appeals disposed of.	Number of appeals pending at the end of the year.	Total number of appeals for disposal.	Number of appeals disposed of	Number of appeals pending at the end of the year.
1	2	3	4	5	6	7
1953 ..	118	45	63	50	26	14
1954 ..	97	32	65	31	19	12
1955 ..	118	84	34	24	20	4
1956 ..	114	80	34	17	16	1
1957 ..	97	53	46	24	10	14
1958 ..	113	88	25	30	25	14
1959 ..	73	50	23	30	23	7
1960 ..	56	35	21	19	14	5
1961 ..	55	26	29	15	9	6
1962 ..	59	16	43	20	11	9

The number of pending appeals particularly of civil appeals is quite large and in some years (1953, 1954, 1961 and 1962), the number of civil appeals pending at the end of the year exceed the number of civil appeals disposed of during the years. The figures for 1937—1946 given below as compared with the figures for 1952—62, suggest that there has not been any marked increase in civil litigation:—

Year.	Institution of suits.			
	Title suits.	Money suits.	Rent suits.	S.C.C. suits.
1937	188	139	5,796	481
1938	199	125	7,739	366
1939	188	199	6,936	361
1940	231	73	10,646	393
1941	205	114	8,507	361
1942	146	107	1,552	202
1943	282	284	8,225	230
1944	308	150	4,153	300
1945	242	131	3,348	166
1946	138	120	3,157	164

The number of rent suits has considerably decreased during recent years because of the abolition of *zamindari*. The figures for the other types of suits seem to be fluctuating.

Both the Subordinate Judge of Madhepura and the District Judge of Bhagalpur supported the contention. It was pointed out that during 1937—1946, the institution of sessions cases for the judgeship of Santal Parganas district was only 190 and a Court of Sessions was established at Dumka. The number of sessions cases for the sub-district of Saharsa for the same period (1937—1946) was 281, which was much more than that of sessions cases of Santal Parganas district. The District Judge, Bhagalpur, in his letter no. 1-9-1772, dated Bhagalpur, the 3rd July 1947, suggested the establishment of a District Judge's Court, either at Saharsa or Madhepura. The District and Sessions Judge, Bhagalpur in his letter no. 3161, dated the 21st September 1949, again expressed his opinion in favour of the establishment of the Court of an Additional District and Sessions Judge. He also suggested that as an immediate temporary measure the Subordinate Judge of Madhepura might be empowered to admit all civil appeals up to the value of Rs. 2,000. He further mentioned that there was only one Subordinate Judge whose time was occupied in hearing sessions cases as an Assistant Sesssions Judge and hearing criminal appeals from the decisions of the Magistrates holding second and third class powers. Hence, the posting of a Second Subordinate Judge was considered essential so that all civil appeals from the Munsif's judgement coming from Saharsa and filed before the District Judge, Bhagalpur, might be sent to him for disposal. But the post of an Additional Subordinate Judge or that of District and Sessions Judge for Saharsa district has not been, so far, created. The matter is still under correspondence. The Subordinate Judge of Madhepura has, however, been empowered to admit all civil appeals up to the value of Rs. 2,000.

A petition signed by 616 inhabitants of Supaul subdivision was filed to the District Judge, Bhagalpur, on 10th December, 1887 for the establishment of a separate court of Munsif at Supaul with its jurisdiction for the Supaul subdivision. It was followed by another application in 1907. But the matter is still pending and at present the Munsif of Madhepura has jurisdiction over the whole district including Supaul subdivision.

As a result of Kosi floods the Court of the Munsif of Madhepura was shifted to Supaul with effect from 5th June 1934, vide notification no. 813-2C-4-JR, dated the 28th May 1934. The office of the Subdivisional Officer of Madhepura was also shifted to Supaul in the same year. The offices of the Subdivisional Officer, Madhepura at Supaul and the Court of the Munsif were shifted back to Madhepura with effect from 1st July 1938, vide letter no. IIJ-I-4234-R., dated 2nd June 1938. The offices of the Subdivisional Officer, Supaul, were shifted to Saharsa in 1940 and came back to Supaul in 1944.

According to the pressure of work an Additional Munsif is occasionally posted at Madhepura to clear up the pending cases.

POWERS.

The District Judge has powers to try suits and hear appeals but generally suits except of special nature are not tried by him. Recently his appellate powers in the civil side have been raised to Rs. 10,000. He is also vested with some special powers, viz., (1) Claim Officer in respect of cases of minor railway accidents, (2) he is the single member of Motor Accidents Claim Tribunal for the purpose of adjudicating upon the claims for compensation in respect of motor accidents, (3) he has also powers to try cases under the Companies Act, 1956, and (4) he has been empowered to hear appeals against the decisions of the Claim Officers, under section 16 of the Bihar Land Reforms Act, 1950.

Besides, civil powers, the District Judge has the powers of Sessions Judge. Since the introduction of the scheme of separation of executive and judicial functions from 1st July 1957 he is also vested with the powers of a First Class Magistrate and also as an Additional District Magistrate. He is empowered to inspect all the criminal courts and offices in the district except that of the District Magistrate.

Under section 76 of the Bihar Panchayat Raj Act (Bihar Act VII of 1948) the District Judge has powers at all times to inspect the proceedings and records of *Gram Kutchery* and Benches thereof.

Under section 19 of the Hindu Marriage Act, 1955, every petition for divorce, etc., is filed in his Court.

The permanent court of the Sub-Judge at Madhepura is vested with the powers of trying Small Cause Court suits up to the value of Rs. 750. He is also empowered to try suits in the ordinary procedure up to unlimited limit and to hear all the appeals from the decisions of the Munsif, Madhepura. The Sub-Judge of Madhepura is also an Assistant Sessions Judge and as such all cases not punishable with death or imprisonment for life are generally tried by him when they are transferred to him from the file of the District Sessions Judge, Bhagalpur.

There is a Munsif at Madhepura who is vested with the powers to try suits in the ordinary procedure up to the value of Rs. 5,000 and Small Cause Court suits up to the value of Rs. 300 within the local limits of his court which extends over the whole district. The Munsif is also in charge of the Copying Department, Forms and Record Room.

After the separation of the executive and judicial functions of one and the same officer, the Judicial Magistrates (both Stipendiary and Honorary) have come under the administrative control of the District and Sessions Judge, Bhagalpur. Provision for their staff, court rooms, furniture, law books, forms and stationery is made by the District Magistrate. The District Magistrate deputes bench clerks for the courts of the Judicial Magistrates. Now there are no

reported to and disposed of by the Magistrates on the executive side for the last six years are given below:—

Cases under Local and Special Acts.

Year.	Number of offences reported.	Cases returned as true.	Cases brought to trial.	Cases under trial including the pending cases of the previous year.
1	2	3	4	5
1957	2,328	1,457	1,596	2,135
1958	2,359	1,826	1,579	3,156
1959	1,387	1,014	635	1,830
1960	983	802	602	2,129
1961	1,622	1,377	1,259	7,619
1962	2,092	1,328	1,737	6.665

Year.	Acquitted or discharged.	Convicted.	Died, escaped or transferred to another court.	Cases remaining pending for trial at the end of the year.
1	6	7	8	9
1957	256	1,280	10	580
1958	862	1,165	69	1,060
1959 . ..	481	1,120	53	176
1960	920	487	..	716
1961	3.517	1,182	2	2,918
1962	2,552	1,396	15	2,702

The number of cases pending for trial is very large particularly in the years 1961 and 1962.

The figures of criminal cases and appeals disposed of by the Sub-Judge, Madhepura who is also vested with the powers of Assistant Sessions Judge are as follows:—

Year	Criminal cases				Criminal appeals.		
	Total number of sessions cases.	Number of cases disposed of.	Number of cases with-drawn.	Number of cases pending.	Total number of appeals.	Total number of appeals disposed of.	Number of appeals pending.
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
1955 ..	39	33	..	6	18	12	6
1956 ..	37	28	..	9	22	16	6
1957 ..	40	32	..	8	16	16	..
1958 ..	30	24	6	9	10	2	8
1959 ..	45	33	5	7	37	31	6
1960 ..	48	36	1	11	18	16	2
1961 ..	34	24	1	9	11	8	3
1962 ..	42	23	..	19	18	11	7

The figures given in the above table are for the entire district of Saharsa as there is only one Assistant Sessions Judge at Madhepura whose jurisdiction extends over the whole district.

It may be pointed out that the number of sessions cases filed during the last eight years to the Assistant Sessions Judge, Madhepura, comes to 324 which exceeds the total number of 281 sessions cases filed during 1937—46. This indicates that the filing of sessions cases is gradually increasing.

It will be interesting to refer to the *Annual Criminal Report of the Bhagalpur District for the year* 1869, preserved in the Record-Room of the District Judge, Bhagalpur, as some of the observations still hold good:—

> "Cases are disposed of in the Madhepurah subdivision with greater delay than in other court in this district; the reason apparently being that the Officer in charge of the Madhepurah subdivision having also charge of the Soople* subdivision has much to do both in the criminal as well as in the Revenue Departments. Furthermore, the country in the northern part of this district being rather low is not easily accessible from one part to the other during the rains and there being no railway communication more time is generally required for attendance of parties than in the southern part of the district."

It may be pointed out here that Supaul subdivision had come into being in 1870 before a copy of the *Annual Criminal Report for* 1869 was sent to the Registrar, High Court, Fort William, Bengal, vide letter no. Crl.-112, dated 4th May 1870, from the office of the District Judge, Bhagalpur.

It is peculiar that the observations made out a century ago are, more or less, applicable even now. There are now (1963) several Munsif-Magistrates and a few Judicial Honorary Magistrates in this district to try criminal cases. But there is only one Assistant Sessions Judge and the number of sessions cases has increased to a great extent. The Assistant Sessions Judge is also the Sub-Judge and has to see to the administration of Civil Justice. All this causes a certain amount of delay in the disposal of the criminal cases. The remarks about the bad communications still hold good to a great extent.

To sum up, the organisation consists of the District and Sessions Judge, Bhagalpur who is the administrative head of the Judicial Department. There is one Sub-Judge at Madhepura who is vested with the powers of an Assistant Sessions Judge and with powers to hear appeals from others passed by Second and Third Class Magistrates. Prior to April, 1963, there were a few Judicial Magistrates.

* The old spelling of Supaul is maintained in the quotation (P. C. R. C.).

passed unanimously and it was sent to the District Magistrate, Saharsa, vide Notified Area Committee's letter no. 119, dated 14th July, 1958, for further action. The Government in their letter no. 7843-L. S.-G., Bihar, Patna, dated 19th July, 1960, desired that as per rule 18 of the Municipality Act, 1922, a draft notification with details of wards and number of municipal commissioners should be submitted. The desired draft notification was sent to the Commissioner, Bhagalpur Division and a copy of the same was forwarded to the Under-Secretary, Local Self-Government Department, Bihar, Patna, vide letter no. 5275-2 (General Section), Saharsa Collectorate, dated 21st November, 1960, for further action.

DISTRICT BOARD.

The District Board of Saharsa was constituted in June, 1948. Prior to this, the District Board of Bhagalpur constituted in April, 1887 under the Bengal Local Self-Government Act of 1885 exercised its control over the areas now under Saharsa district.*

In the beginning the Additional District Magistrate, Saharsa remained in charge of Saharsa District Board. The Additional District Magistrate made over charge to the first elected Chairman on the 9th October, 1949. He continued in office till 15th September, 1958 when he along with the Vice-Chairman and the members of the Board had to vacate their respective offices in pursuance of the direction given in Government notification no. 8001-L. S.-G., dated the 12th September, 1958 and the District Magistrate, Saharsa took over charge from them. The reasons for taking over charge from the elected persons have been given in the Bihar District Boards and Local Boards (Control and Management) Bill, 1958, which are as follows:—

> "The District Board and Local Boards constituted under the provisions of the Bihar and Orissa Local Self-Government Act of 1885 have outlived their utility under the completely changed circumstances. On attainment of independence, there have been developments on a very large scale in the various fields of activities, viz., Agriculture, Industry, Co-operatives, *Gram Panchayats*, etc. These developments call for a complete re-orientation in the conception and constitution of District Boards and Local Boards so that these Bodies could fulfil their role effectively in the changed circumstances. This is not possible unless the existing law is carefully examined in the light of these developments and amended suitably to meet the present needs of society.

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* For details about Bhagalpur District Board, see *Bhagalpur District Gazetteer* (1962) by P. C. Roy Chaudhury, pp. 457—465.

"The Balvantrai Mehta Committee on the Community Development and National Extension Service have made a number of recommendations specially with regard to the future set-up of District Boards. These recommendations require detailed examination and careful consideration. Besides, some of the sister States in India are considering legislation regarding the constitution and powers of these Local Bodies and it is necessary to examine the provisions of these laws and their actual working for sometime before we embark on a comprehensive amendment of the Bihar and Orissa Local Self-Government Act.

"It is, therefore, clear that the new set-up of District Boards undoubtedly requires comprehensive amendment of the Bihar and Orissa Local Self-Government Act, 1885. It was accordingly decided by the State Government to take over temporarily for three years the control and management of District Boards and Local Boards pending consideration of their future set-up."

After three years the period has been further extended annually and the Board is still vested in the State Government.

The District Magistrate of Saharsa handed over the charge to the Special Officer, belonging to the State Civil Service, on 22nd August, 1959 to carry out the administration of the District Board. With the assumption of the office by the Special Officer, all the powers vested in the District Magistrate were transferred to him. The post of the Special Officer was redesignated as Administrator, vide Government letter no. 8067-L. S.-G., dated the 1st September, 1961 and since then the administration of the District Board runs under the Administrator, District Board. The Administrator functions both under the Local Self-Government Department and the District Magistrate of Saharsa.

Finance.

The main source of income of the District Board is the road cess, originally payable by the landlords under the Cess Act at the rate of annas two for every rupee of the land revenue by the tenant and an equal amount by the Government. The road cess used to be paid with the land revenue and then the road cess was transferred to the Board's fund in the Government Treasury after the deduction of the cost of realisation. After the passing of the Bihar Land Reforms Act, 1950 the Government took over the *zamindari* from the landlords and the road cess is now to be paid by the Government. The demand of cess relating to Saharsa district as transferred by Bhagalpur Collectorate was Rs. 4,68,961 but after

The relationship of the Bench and the Bar has been cordial. The Bar Association of Madhepura has been active in moving the authority concerned for ventilating the grievances of the litigant public. It had moved the High Court through its resolution, dated 2nd August 1951, for vesting the Sub-Judge, Madhepura, with the powers of disposing of all appeals preferred against the decisions of the Munsif of Madhepura in view of the great difficulties and harassment of the litigant public of both the subdivisions, Madhepura and Supaul, in filing and getting their appeals disposed of at Bhagalpur specially during the rainy season when the railway communication was usually seriously dislocated. The Bar Association was successful in their move and the Sub-Judge, Madhepura, was vested with such powers.. The Bar has supplied the leadership in the district to a great extent. The members of the Bar have been responsible for starting of many of the educational institutions and libraries. Some of them have taken part in the political activities as well.

There has recently been a somewhat shift in the leadership of the area and the Bar has not been supplying it as much as it did in the past. The emergence of certain strongly based political parties where the members of the Bar do not, by and large, play much part have caused a temporary eclipse in the previous position of the Bar as supplying the leadership. With the abolition of zamindary and the creation of the Panchayat Courts, the Bar has lost much of its income. But as the repository of the intellectual brain-trust, the Bar is bound to continue in its great role in the district and in the country.

CHAPTER XIII.

LOCAL SELF-GOVERNMENT.

The Local Self-Government bodies in a district are normally the District Boards, Local Boards, Municipalities, Notified Area Committees and the Gram Panchayats. These are statutory bodies vested with the powers to make by-laws and to manage local affairs entrusted to them. Local administration of this type has been quite indigenous in India and the ancient *Gram Panchayats* are instances. The institution of Local Self-Government in its present form was, however, brought in by the British administration more to decentralise certain administrative functions.

MUNICIPALITY.

Towns in the modern sense are now on the way of development. The old towns like Madhepura and Supaul could not have a stabilised economy because of the constant ravages of the Kosi river and continued as village towns through decades. As a matter of fact Madhepura the most advanced town with Civil Courts for the entire district had once to be abandoned as administrative headquarters and was shifted to Supaul after it was flooded. Supaul was also threatened from time to time by the Kosi floods and had to be protected by embankments. The peculiar want of all-weather roads from the *thana* headquarters to the subdivisional or district headquarters still remains and has been a stumbling block for development of trade and commerce. Even portions of railway tracts had to be abandoned as the hungry river Kosi swallowed up those areas. These are some of the factors why proper towns could not grow and even large villages like Bangaon, Nirmali, Murliganj or Maheshi had not only to remain as villages but from time to time had taste of the ravages of the Kosi. Nirmali town in spite of ring *bundhs* was flooded quite a number of times. There is no wonder that there is no municipality yet in this district.

But with the implementation of the Kosi Project, whereby the turbulent Kosi has not only been chained but also made to flow by man-made canals, there are bound to be rapid changes. The tracts of Saharsa district are expected to be smiling once again with crops and trade and commerce will thrive. Saharsa, the district headquarters has been sited after a good deal of forethought and from a petty railway station with a very small *bazar* and serving more the interests of Bangaon village, Saharsa is now peopled by 14,803 persons according to 1961 census. Saharsa has still got a Notified Area Committee. The question of converting the Notified Area Committee, Saharsa into a municipality was considered at a meeting of the Committee held on 22nd May, 1958. The resolution was

All of them have since been replaced by the Munsif-Magistrates by 1964. Now there are nine Munsif-Magistrates—posted in the different subdivisions besides two Honorary Judicial Magistrates one each at Supaul and Madhepura (May, 1964).

PANCHAYAT ADALATS.

The details of the working of *Gram Panchayats* have been given in the text on "Local Self-Government". It may be mentioned that the Bihar Panchayat Raj Act, 1947, was enforced in this district in 1948. The object for establishment of *Gram Kutcheries* is to cut down litigation, expedite the disposal of the cases cheaply at the village level and to bring about as many compromises as possible. The total number of *Gram Kutcheries* in the district is 264.

According to section 71 of the Bihar Panchayat Raj (Amendment and Validating) Act, 1959, a person who is arrested has the right to consult and to be defended by a legal practitioner. In no other circumstances any legal practitioner can appear, plead or act on behalf of any party in any suit or case before the *Gram Kutchery*.

The idea was that with the establishment and functioning of *Gram Kutchery* the cases in the courts of the Stipendiary Magistrates will decrease but in fact, this aim has not been fulfilled. On the other hand, it is found that the elections of the *Mukhiya, Sarpanch* and *Panches* are often followed or preceded by tension and litigation. *Gram Panchayat Kutcheries* have, so far, failed to liquidate litigation or bring about compromises in any appreciable manner.

The *Gram Kutchery* is headed by the *Sarpanch* who is elected by adult suffrage. There is a panel of eight *Panches* excluding the *Sarpanch*, out of whom four *Panches* are elected by a joint meeting of the *Sarpanch*, elected *Panches* and all the elected members of the Executive Committee excluding the *Mukhiya*.

Under section 62 of the Bihar Panchayat Raj Act, 1947, the *Gram Kutchery* has been empowered to try the following offences as well as abetment of and attempts to commit any such offence, if committed with the local jurisdiction of *Gram Kutchery*:—

Sections 140, 143, 145, 147, 157, 153, 160, 172, 174, 178, 179, 269, 277, 283, 285, 286, 290, 294, 323, 334, 336, 341, 352, 356, 357, 358, 374, 379, 380, 381, 403, 411, 426, 428, 430, 447, 448, 461, 504, 506, 510 of the Indian Penal Code.

The Bench is not empowered to take cognizance of any offence under section 379, 380, 381, or 411 in which the value of the property alleged to be stolen exceeds one hundred rupees or in which the accused has been previously convicted of an offence punishable under Chapter XVII of the Indian Penal Code with imprisonment of either description for a term of three years or upwards.

A Bench of the *Gram Panchayat* of the *Pradhan* or *Dwitya Varga* may pass simple imprisonment for a term not exceeding one month and fine not exceeding one hundred rupees and in default of payment of fine, simple imprisonment for a term not exceeding 15 days. A Bench of the *Gram Panchayat* of *Tritiya Varga* may impose fine not exceeding fifty rupees and in default of fine, simple imprisonment for a term not exceeding seven days.

Whenever an offender is sentenced to pay a fine the *Sarpanch* may take action for the recovery of the fine by issuing a warrant for the levy of the amount by attachment and sale of any movable property belonging to the offender. The accused is to be taken to the jail by the village *chawkidar* and by such members of the Village Volunteer Force as the *Mukhiya* may direct and the *Panchayat* has to meet the cost of transfer and escort of a prisoner to the nearest sub-jail.

The institution of *Gram Panchayat* is to be affected by Zila Parishad Act, which has been discussed in the text on 'Local Self-Government'. The statistics of cases and suits disposed of by the *Gram Kutchery* in this district have also been given in the text on 'Local Self-Government'.

Legal Profession and Bar Association.

The legal profession consists of Barristers, Advocates, Pleaders and Mukhtears. There is no Barrister in this district.

There are 35 Advocates, 15 Pleaders and 32 Mukhtears at Madhepura; 5 Advocates, 19 Pleaders and 12 Mukhtears at Supaul and 2 Advocates, 16 Pleaders and 7 Mukhtears at Saharsa.

The number of Mukhtears in this district is on the decline as Mukhtearship examination has been abolished. They are normally entitled to appear before the Magistrates only.

There were only four or five Advocates all at Madhepura in this district prior to 1961 when the Advocates Act, 1961, had not come into operation. This Act prescribes enrolment fees of only Rs. 250 to the State Bar Council. At present (June, 1965) any pleader or a law graduate of 21 years of age or above can be Advocate by depositing Rs. 250 to the State Bar Council. Previously the licence fees was Rs. 1,200. This concession in fees is a reason for the influx of Advocates. Recently Mukhtiars of a particular standing have been allowed to enrol themselves as Advocates.

There are Bar Associations at Madhepura, Supaul and Saharsa. The Bar Association of Madhepura is the oldest in the district as the court of Munsif has been functioning at Madhepura from 1845 when the subdivision was created. There is no court of Munsif either at Saharsa or at Supaul. The Bar Association of Supaul comes next in age.

zamindari abolition the demand of cess as furnished by Saharsa Collectorate is as follows:—

Year.	Demand of cess.
	Rs.
1958-59	1,58,547.69
1959-60	1,58,547.69
1960-61	1,58,547.69
1961-62	2,86,608.00
1962-63	3,21,068.00

The Government is not paying cess to the District Board and against the cess it has been giving *ad hoc* advances to the Board which is as follows:—

Year.	*Ad hoc* advance.
	Rs.
1958-59	3,71,768
1959-60	3,77,618
1960-61	3,18,052
1961-62	3,71,068
1962-63	1,48,429

The other main income of the Board comes from the pounds and ferries. Saharsa District Board maintains 60 pounds and 28 ferries The income from them is given below:—

Year.	Items of income.	
	Pounds.	Ferries
	Rs.	Rs.
1958-59	21,714	29,551
1959-60	24.550	41,696
1960 61	24,063	28,343
1961-62	18,545	40,930
1962-63	19,207	25,045

The other sources of income are cart tax, Board's property, Government grants and other miscellaneous items. The cart tax is levied at the rate of Rs. 4 per cart for business purpose. There is no tax on cart used for agricultural purpose. However, registration fee at the rate of Rs. 2 is compulsory for both business as well as cart for agricultural purposes.

The statement showing the income and expenditure of the Board from 1954-55 to 1961-62 has been given here—

Statement of Receipts under Major Heads.

Major Heads.	1954-55.	1955-56.	1956-57.	1957-58.	1958-59.	1959-60.	1960-61.	1961-62.
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
	Rs.	Rs.	Rs.	Rs.	Rs.	Rs.	Rs.	Rs.
1. Land Revenue	2,220	3,830	3,038	3,549	2,948	3,773	1,069	533
2. Provincial rates	1,71,432	3,17,720	3,82,167	3,53,800	3,71,768	3,77,618	3,18,572	3,71,068
3. Interest*	7	..	..	..	..	..	..	..
4. Law and Justice .. .	..	..	..	12	26	1,270	909	90
5. Education	6,483	9,524	10,254	13,781	12,235	14,161	13,045	17,354
6. Medical and Public Health ..	1,08,485	95,300	70,525	65,193	68,945	90,637	1,12,676	1,19,943
7. Scientific and other minor departments.	2,138	625	1.218	1,252	872	935	348	26
8. Contribution to Provident Fund†	205	..	..	..	..	..	..	..
9. Miscellaneous	84,683	1,84,176	1,21,776	1,12,396	1,71,137	1,36,438	1,68,110	1,37,514
10. Civil Works	1,69,512	1,09,744	2,48,969	1,75,122	2,66,071	4,57,055	6,65,557	5,49,299
11. Debts, Deposits and Advances	4.17,673	70.927	1,18,158	1,33 988	1,65,149	1,54,971	1,04 068	1,60,409
12. Total income excluding opening balance.	9,62 838	7,91,846	9,56,105	8.59.093	10,59,151	12,36,858	13,84,354	13,56,056
13. Opening balance ..	6,56,605	1,89,831	3,17,266	3,53,028	2,89,464	2,41,195	3,86,606	7,33,204
14. Total receipts	16,19,443	9.81,677	12,73,371	12,12,121	13,48,615	14,78,053	17,70,960	20,89.260

* Interest on cess arrears was paid by the *zamindars* but when *zamindari* was vested in the Government the interest has ceased to be paid.

† The Union Committee at Madhepura used to deposit the contribution of the Provident Fund of its employees to the District Board, Saharsa, but after 1954-55 it did not deposit the same.

Statement of Expenditure under Major Heads.

Major Heads.	1954-55.	1955-56.	1956-57.	1957-58.	1958-59.	1959-60.	1960-61.	1961-62.
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
	Rs.	Rs.	Rs.	Rs.	Rs.	Rs.	Rs.	Rs.
1. General Administration ..	61,102	57,908	54,754	55,341	52,449	42,929	45,086	43,447
2. Police	4,564	100	1,136	3.333	787	1,406	260	665
3. Education	3,07,292	24,634	27,011	23,191	22,035	23,340	32,793	23,305
4. Public Health	1,95,277	1,64,821	1,60,977	1,72,147	1,93,921	1,87,944	1,86,863	1,83,142
5. Medical	1,32,069	83,732	78,477	83,275	1,00,008	99,966	1,06,096	1,06,467
6. Scientific and other minor departments.	18,876	21,097	22,883	19,862	34,551	26,395	14,516	1,197
7. Superannuation allowance and pension.	14,331	9,129	9,470	9.431	11,066	14,204	15,692	14,256
8. Printing	11,079	9,286	2,021	23,249	15,728	16,080	29,248	24,485
9. Miscellaneous	42,136	14.439	22,656	15,248	12,587	72,171	20,530	92,150
10. Famine Relief	..	219	..	25	75	..	..	..
11. Civil Works	4,89,572	2,00,766	4,51,675	4,08,116	5,09,121	4,86,887	4,25,208	4,41,983
12. Debts, deposits and advances	1,53,314	78,280	89,283	1,09,439	1,55,092	1,20,126	1,61,463	97.591
13. Total	14,29,612	6,64,411	9,20,343	9,22,657	11,07,420	10,91,447	10,37,755	10,28,678
14. Closing Balance	1,89,831	3,17,266	3.53,028	2,89,464	2,41,194	3,86,606	7,33,204	10,60,582
15. Total .. .	16,19,443	9,81,677	12,73,371	12,12,121	13,48,615	14,78,053	17,70.959	20,89,260

The financial position of the District Board is weak. The total liabilities amounting to Rs. 28,99,777 exceed the total assets which amount to Rs. 17,45,138 only in 1961-62. The main reason for the poor financial condition is the fall in the demand of cess which has already been discussed.

Functions.

Education.—The District Board was constituted in 1948. In 1949 the District Board had only 50 Middle schools and 524 Primary schools. The number of schools managed by the District Board rose from 574 to 887 (86 Middle schools and 801 Primary schools) by 1954.

In April, 1954 the District Education Fund was created and a District Superintendent was appointed to administer the Fund. Since then the educational institutions are under the care and supervision of the District Superintendent of Education, Saharsa. The District Board, however, is required to contribute to the Education Fund at the rate of average of the last three years' expenditure over education. By the creation of the post of the District Superintendent of Education, the Board has been divested a lot of its functions so far as education is concerned. It is unfortunate that the position of the teachers under the Chairman before the creation of this post was rather unenviable and the school teachers used to be exploited for political purposes and education was much neglected.

Roads.—The District Board maintains about 14 miles of metalled and 812 miles of unmetalled road. The expenditure over maintenance of roads from 1958-59 to 1961-62 is as follows:—

Year.	Expenditure (in rupees).
1958-59	2,89,067
1959-60	3,02,773
1960-61	2,16,867
1961-62	2,89,506

The details about the roads of the District Board have been given in the chapter "Communications and Medical and Public Health".

Under Rural and Urban Health Organisation Scheme a staff consisting of one District Medical Officer of Health, three Assistant Health Officers, seven Sanitary Inspectors, sixteen Health Inspectors, forty-five Vaccinators, thirty-three Disinfectors, six Office Clerks and five Orderly Peons is functioning in this district for the prevention of epidemics and to take appropriate measures when epidemics break out in the district. Besides, one clerk, one store-compounder and one peon have been appointed and attached with the staff working under the scheme but in their cases expenditure is entirely met by

the District Board. Under this scheme a sum of Rs. 57 thousand is contributed annually by the Government and the remaining expenditure (above 57 thousand) is met by the District Board.

In the year 1961-62, 45,237 primary vaccinations and 5,44,075 re-vaccinations were given and 2,80,754 wells were disinfected.

Medical.—Out of 19 Allopathic dispensaries 16 have been provincialised and the remaining three are functioning at Balua Bazar, Barail and Bharauli. In these dispensaries only outdoor patients are treated and free medical treatment is provided. Very minor operations are undertaken in these dispensaries.

The District Board maintains nine Malaria centres at Chandrain, Gualpara, Hatwaria, Khakhai, Karjain Bazar and Telwa. A lot of good work has been done through these centres.

Besides, there are 14 Ayurvedic dispensaries located at Bhatania, Bhaptiahi, Chataria, Dhabauli, Goalpara, Girdharpatty, Gurkihat, Jiwachpur, Kashnagar, Koriapatty, Sauranjan, Nirmali Bazar Pokhram, Ratwara and Saharsa. Six Homoeopathic dispensaries are located at Amha, Bhagwanpur, Basuli, Bhatrandha (at Lankaha), Murho, Makho Charney, Naya Nagar and Puraini. Four Unani dispensaries were set up at Madhepura Madhaili Bazar, Mohrampur Baghaili and Yadhapatty. All these dispensaries are maintained by the District Board. The Board had also eight Veterinary dispensaries which have been provincialised. The expenditure over medical and public health has been given in the statement showing expenditure of the District Board under major heads. The other details may be found in the chapter on "Medical and Public Health".

Inspection Bungalows.—The District Board maintains 17 Inspection Bungalows. The list of Inspection Bungalows with other details have been given in the chapter on "Communications". Usually an Inspection Bungalow has got two bed rooms with a bath room and one common room with some basic furniture. Food is not available in the Inspection Bungalow but the Chaukidar's services may be available for cooking purpose. A Gazetted Officer may occupy an Inspection Bungalow free of rent for five days and thereafter rent is charged from them. But the receipts from electric and services from Inspection Bungalows in 1960-61, 1961-62 and 1962-63 were Rs. 2,927, Rs. 3,205 and Rs. 3,185.81 respectively. The bungalows are available to the District Board employees and the non-officials as well

Press.—The District Board maintains a press. The press was established in January, 1957. It was started mainly with the object of printing the various forms for the District Board for which no suitable press was available here. It has been further expanded and now it also takes outside job work. The expenditure over press has been shown in the statement showing the expenditure of the District Board under the head 'Printing'.

Conclusion.—The powers and functions of the District Board have been much reduced. The creation of the District Education Fund under the Superintendent of Education has relieved the District Board from the management of schools. The provincialisation of sixteen Allopathic and all the Veterinary dispensaries has reduced the work of the District Board relating to Medical and Public Health. The Public Health Engineering Department has taken over the work of rural water-supply previously entrusted to the District Board. Similarly the Public Works Department has also taken over a few roads from the District Board and thus the civil works of the District Board have also been curtailed. The rapid expansion of the *Gram Panchayats* and the Block Development Blocks have also encroached upon the major duties and obligations of the District Board.

Now the District Board is going to be replaced by *Zila Parishad.* The Bihar Panchayat Samitis and Zila Parishads Act, 1961 is going to be implemented first in the four districts, Patna, Bhagalpur, Muzaffarpur and Ranchi in 1964 and the provisions of the said Act are likely to be extended to the remaining districts of Bihar later.

Under the Act every *Zila Parishad* will consist of the following members: All *Pramukhs* of the *Panchayat Samities* in the district, all members of the Legislative Assembly of the State and all members of the House of the People whose constituencies lie wholly or partly in the district, all members of the Legislative Council of the State and of the Council of States who are residents of the district, one person from the Scheduled Castes and one from the Scheduled Tribes when the population of such castes or tribes exceeds five per cent of the total population of the district to be co-opted if such persons are not otherwise members, three persons elected by an electoral college consisting of the Commissioners of Municipalities and Members of Notified Area Committee, in the district from amongst themselves, two persons elected by electoral college consisting of the members of managing committees of all the Central Co-operative Banks in the district from amongst themselves. three women to be co-opted if women are not otherwise members and one person to be nominated by the Bihar State *Panchayat Parishad.*

The members either elected or co-opted are to hold office for a period of three years. An *Adhyaksha* and an *Upadhyaksha* for each *Zila Parishad* are to be elected by the members of the *Zila Parishad* from amongst themselves and their term of office is three years from the date of their election.

The important powers and functions of the *Adhyaksha* and *Upadhyaksha* are to convene and preside over the meetings of the *Zila Parishad,* to have full access to the records of the *Zila Parishad,* and to exercise administrative control over the Secretary of the *Zila Parishad* for the purpose of implementation of the decisions and resolutions of the *Zila Parishad* and that of any Standing Committee.

Under the Act the District Development Officer shall be the Secretary of the *Zila Parishad* and his powers and functions are defined in section 21 of the Act. He will be responsible for day-to-day administration of the *Zila Parishad.*

Local Boards.

Previously the area of this district was divided into two sub-divisions, namely, Madhepura and Supaul under Bhagalpur district up to April, 1954. The *District Gazetteer of Bhagalpur* by J. Byrne mentions* that there were Local Boards at Madhepura and Supaul and the Madhepura Local Board maintained about 288 miles of road and the Supaul Local Board about 225 miles. These Local Boards had the charge of local and village roads which were not directly under the District Engineer and of the pounds in their respective jurisdiction. They had also the charge of Primary schools. The duties of the Local Boards were virtually discharged by the Sub-divisional Officers at each subdivision. Their finances were derived from doles made by the District Board and their budget was framed on the basis of this allotment and was submitted for the approval of the District Board. Their duties and activities were rather restricted in scope.

The Local Boards at Supaul and Madhepura functioned under the District Board of Bhagalpur and the relationship was abolished before the constitution of the District Board at Saharsa in 1948. The Local Boards, however, continued under the Saharsa District Board with similar functions as before. They were abolished when the Board vested in the State Government.

Union Board.

A Union Board at Supaul was constituted, vide Government notification no. 10529-L. S.-G., dated the 10th November, 1928. The Union Board was abolished in accordance with the Government notification no. 792-L. S.-G., dated the 28th January, 1959 and in its place a Notified Area Committee was established. There was no other Union Board in the areas of this district previously under the Bhagalpur district.

Union Committee.

Two Union Committees, one at Madhepura and the other at Nirmali were constituted, vide Government notification nos. 5824-N, dated the 28th April, 1915 and 443-M, dated the 9th May, 1919, respectively and they were abolished, vide notification nos. 3833-L. S.-G., dated 21st March, 1960 and 2188-L. S.-G., dated 20th March, 1962. In their places Notified Area Committees have been established. Notified Area Committees have been separately discussed.

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* *District Gazetteer of Bhagalpur* by J. Byrne (1911), p. 150.

Gram Panchayats.

History.

The institution of the Local Self-Government in the shape of a village assembly is an old institution. Village administration was once more or less entrusted to the village headmen commonly known as '*Gopa*' in the Hindu period and '*Muquadam*' in the Muslim period. The local democracy in the form of *Panchayat* continued to flourish under the Hindu and Muslim rulers. But with the establishment of the British rule in India the village communities began to disintegrate. The chief reasons for this disintegration were (1) the direct settlement of land with the *zamindars;* (2) centralised system of administration and appointment of judicial and administrative officers to take over functions performed by the village communities and (3) development of communications.

Under Act VI of 1870 an attempt was made to associate *Panchayats* with the conduct of the *Chaukidari* system. The provisions of the Act were extended in 1890 to the rural unions to seek the co-operation of villages. But they were mere agencies for the assessment and collection of *Chaukidari* tax. In 1899 Mr. R. C. Dutt, a great economist, scholar and administrator, in his presidential address at the sessions of the Indian National Congress observed that in village administration there was no touch between the rulers and the people, the only link between the administrator and the people in civil administration was the hated link of the police. So he advocated that the village unions should be made real centres of village administration. But such suggestions were not acceptable to the British Government at that time.

The report of the Royal Commission on Decentralisation in 1909 mentions: "The foundation of any edifice which shall associate the people with the administration must be the village as being an area of much antiquity than the new administrative creations and one in which people are known to one another and have interests which cover on well recognised objects.......... And it is most desirable alike in the interest of decentralisation and in order to associate the people with the task of the administration that an attempt should be made to constitute and develop village *Panchayats* for the administration of local affairs". The Commission suggested a certain allocation of funds out of land cess, of receipts from village cattle pounds to the village *Panchayat* and recommended the reconstitution of the village *Panchayat* with powers to try petty civil and criminal cases, to look after minor village works, to control Primary schools and to manage fuel and fodder reserves. Further in 1915 the report of Bengal District Administration Committee also recommended that *Panchayats* should be revested with the supervision and control of *chaukidars* functioning within their local jurisdiction and made the suggestion to reform local bodies on the principle of

indirect elections beginning from the village upwards and to entrust local defence to village *Panchayats* with powers of taxation to meet local needs.

Due to these efforts the British Government were driven to the conclusion that the old *Panchayats* must be resuscitated in some form and efforts were made by Provincial Governments to resuscitate village *Panchayats* in the light of broad principles enunciated in the Government of India Resolution of 1915. As a result in 1920 the Village Administration Act was passed to revive the old institution of the village assembly but unfortunately it did not make much headway.

The Indian Statutory (Simon) Commission in its report (1930) appreciated the importance of the village *Panchayats* and observed that the *Panchayat* movement had not made any marked progress. It mentioned that the village *Panchayat* was of special interest and importance as being an attempt to recreate the village as an essential unit of Self-Government. However, during the British regime the village *Panchayats* wherever formed could not be efficient and effective instruments for Local Self-Government.

With the attainment of Independence in 1947, the question of reviving the *Gram Panchayats* was taken up again The organisation of village *Panchayats* was made one of the directive principles of State policy in the Constitution of India. Article 40 of the Constitution lays down, "the State shall take steps to organise village *Panchayats* and endow them with such powers and authority as may be necessary to enable them to function as unit of Self-Government".

The Bihar Panchayat Raj Act, 1947 was passed which received the assent of the Governor-General on 12th January, 1948. It may be mentioned here that the Bihar Panchayat Raj Act, 1947 is not an entirely new piece of legislation and its provisions do not confer wider powers and duties than what were suggested much earlier by the Royal Commission on Decentralisation in 1909 and also by the Bengal District Administration Committee in 1915.

Gram Panchayats in Saharsa District.

The Bihar Panchayat Raj Act was actually implemented in the sub-district of Saharsa with effect from January, 1949. Generally a *Panchayat* is formed in an area which has a total population of 4,000 persons. Normally a number of villages within the radius of 2 miles are grouped together under one *Panchayat*. In the district of Saharsa the number of notified *Gram Panchayats* is 421 in April, 1963 which covers 1,257 villages out of total villages of 1,340 in the district according to 1961 census. The number of actually functioning *Gram Panchayats* is 399.

The *Gram Panchayat* is headed by a *Mukhiya* who is assisted by an Executive Committee consisting of eight members. Out of eight members, four are elected and four are appointed by the *Mukhiya*. While appointing the members of the Executive Committee, the *Mukhiya* is required to take into consideration the claim of the members of the Scheduled Castes, Scheduled Tribes and females. The term of the office of *Mukhiya* or a member of the Executive Committee in the case of *Pradhan Varga Gram Panchayat, Dwitiya Varga Gram Panchayat* and *Tritiya Varga Gram Panchayat* is five, four and three years respectively.

A person is considered disqualified for election, nomination or appointment as *Mukhiya,* or a member of the Executive Committee, *Sarpanch* or *Panch* if such person is not a subject of India, or is in the service of the Central or State Government or any local authority, or has been adjudged by a competent Court to be of unsound mind, or is under twenty-five years of age, or does not reside in the *Gram Panchayat* area for at least one hundred and eighty days in a calendar year, or has been convicted by a criminal court or is a leper, or a person suffering from tuberculosis, or is in the arrears of any tax, toll, fee or rate due from him to the *Gram Panchayat.*

The Government may remove the *Mukhiya* or any other member of the Executive Committee for misconduct, incapacity or neglect of duty on the recommendation of the prescribed authority.

Functions.

Out of 399 *Gram Panchayats* actually functioning in 1963, 225 *Gram Panchayats* have been entrusted with the rent collection work. In 1959-60 only 20 *Gram Panchayats* took up the work of rent collection and collected Rs. 74,965.31 as against the total demand of Rs. 2,13,284.10 and earned Rs. 1,296.01 as commission for rent collection. In 1961-62, 225 *Gram Panchayats* collected Rs. 6,90,492.27 as against the total demand of Rs. 33,80,571.69. In 1962-63 the total demand and collection of rent by *Gram Panchayats* were Rs. 40,53,766.52 and Rs. 22,57,684.88 respectively. The figures of rent collection for the years 1961-62 and 1962-63 have been supplied by the Revenue Office, Saharsa Collectorate and for the year 1959-60 by the District Panchayat Office. The figures indicate that the rent collection work is definitely poor.

Sanitation and conservancy, organising volunteer labour for community work, cleansing and disinfection of sources of drinking water, construction, maintenance and improvement of village roads and maintaining record of vital statistics are the primary functions of the *Gram Panchayats* under the Bihar Panchayat Raj Act, 1947 (amended up to 1959). On a spot enquiry into the performance of these functions of the Gram Panchayats the conclusion was forced on the investigator that very little attention is paid to them.

Better communication is necessary for improvement of village life. Communication plays a vital role and particularly it has got special significance in this district which has had very bad communication. Here the *Gram Panchayat* can play an effective and useful role. The figures supplied by the District Panchayat Office indicate that in 1958-59, 1959-60, 1960-61 and 1961-62, about 19, 45, 19 and 90½ miles of unmetalled roads were constructed and about 108, 144, 80 and 90½ miles of unmetalled roads were repaired respectively. The progress is poor.

Economic Development work.—The *Gram Panchayats* have been engaged in constructing and repairing embankment, *bundhs,* and sinking of wells. A number of schemes have been executed by the *Gram Panchayats* in this district. In the year 1961-62, five *Panchayat Bhawans,* eight school buildings, four Community Halls, four library buildings have been constructed and three wells for drinking water, one well for irrigation and one *ahar* were sunk by the *Gram Panchayats* on contract basis.

Village Volunteer Force.—Section 26 of the Bihar Panchayat Raj Act provides for the organisation of the Village Volunteer Force in each village under the command of the Chief Officer. All able-bodied males of the village between the age-groups of 18 to 30 may be the members of the force. The main functions of the Village Volunteer Force centre round the protection of the village against dacoits, fire, epidemic and other natural calamities. After the Chinese aggression in 1962, Village Volunteer Forces were entrusted with the work of guarding the public utility services like the railway line, bridges, roads, telephones and telegraphs.

Ninety-four Chief Officers of this district have been given refresher course training including the rifle training during four months, i.e., from November, 1962 to February, 1963. Now the trained Chief Officers are giving preliminary training to Village Volunteer Force and out of these trainees 15 trainees from each *Gram Panchayat* are to be given rifle training for which selection is being made now (April, 1963).

The following statement supplied by the District Panchayat Office shows the progress in the training of the Village Volunteer Force:—

Year.	Trained Chief Officers.	Training Camps organised.	Number of Volunteers trained during the year.	Number of Volunteers enrolled during the year.
1958-59	252	60	2,351	[illegible]
1959-60	240	135	2,429	[illegible]
1960-61	310	82	2,928	[illegible]
1961-62	330	67	2,151	[illegible]

Administration of Justice.—Administration of Justice is entrusted to the *Gram Kutcheries*. Under section 62 of the Bihar Panchayat Raj Act, 1947, the Gram Kutchery has been empowered to try under its local jurisdiction the offences as well as abetment of and attempts to commit any offence under sections 140, 143, 145, 147, 151, 153, 160, 172, 174, 178, 179, 269, 277, 283, 285, 286, 290, 294, 323, 334, 336, 341, 352, 356, 357, 358, 374, 379, 380, 381, 403, 411, 426, 428, 430, 447, 448, 461, 504, 506 and 510 of the Indian Penal Code.

The Bench is not empowered to take cognizance of any offence under section 379, 380, 381 or 411 in which the value of the property alleged to be stolen exceeds one hundred rupees or in which the accused has been previously convicted of an offence punishable under Chapter XVII of the Indian Penal Code with imprisonment of either description for a term of three years or more.

A Bench of the *Gram Panchayat* of the *Pradhan* or *Dwitiya Varga* may pass sentence of simple imprisonment for a term not exceeding one month and fine not exceeding one hundred rupees and in default of payment of fine, simple imprisonment for a term not exceeding 15 days. A Bench of the *Gram Kutchery* of *Tritiya Varga Gram Panchayat* may impose fine not exceeding fifty rupees and in default of payment of fine, simple imprisonment for a term not exceeding seven days.

The accused is to be taken to the Jail by the Village Chaukidar and by such members of the Village Volunteer Force as the *Mukhiya* may direct and the *Panchayat* has to meet the cost of transfer and escort of a prisoner to the nearest sub-jail. Whenever an offender has been sentenced to fine, the *Sarpanch* may take action for the recovery of the fines by issuing a warrant for the levy of the amount by attachment and sale of any moveable property belonging to the offender.

In the district of Saharsa 399 *Gram Kutcheries* are functioning (April, 1963) The statements showing number of cases and suits disposed of by the *Gram Kutcheries* in this district from the year 1958-59 to 1961-62 are given here.

Statement showing the suits disposed of by Gram Kutcheries.

Year.	Total number of suits.	Number of suits disposed of by *Gram Kutcheries*.				Called by or sent to the Munsif before judgement.	Pending.
		Compromised.	Decreed.	Dismissed	Total.		
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
1958-59 ..	465	145	121	86	352	Nil	113
1959-60 ..	487	172	82	78	332	16	139
1960-61 ..	214	102	35	22	159	3	52
1961-62 ..	270	154	36	41	231	Nil	39

Statement showing the cases disposed of by the Gram Kutcheries.

Year.	Total number of cases.	No. of cases disposed of by the *Gram Kutcheries.* Compromised.	Acquitted.	Convicted.	Dismissed.	Pending.	No. of cases sent to or called by the S. D. O. before judgement.	No. of cases entertained by S. D. O. under section 72 of Bihar Panchayat Raj Act, 1947.
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
1958-59	2,902	1,338	207	112	685	562	44	12
1959-60	2,822	1,439	117	120	517	526	77	26
1960-61	1,790	856	395	62	..	447	30	..
1961-62	1,711	975	301	34	..	394	7	..

The number of the criminal cases pending is rather large. The first duty of the *Gram Kutchery* is to bring about a compromise failing which it takes up the trial. It is expected to be a forum for dispensing justice in a cheap, quick and efficient manner. It is expected that the witnesses will depose truthfully as the facts of the cases are well known. But in the administration of justice *Gram Kutchery* has not made much satisfactory progress. Less than half of the total cases or suits has been brought to compromise from 1958-59 to 1961 62 in this district. The reasons for the *Gram Kutchery* not functioning satisfactorily are many but the chief reasons are the main motive of the litigating party to harass the other party when he cannot hope to win the case in the *Gram Kutchery*, but which he may expect from the Court. Caste-feelings and party cliques are also said to be the factors but these allegations were not investigated.

Financial Resources.

For the execution of the schemes and plans funds are necessary. The *Panchayats* have, therefore, been given adequate powers to raise local taxes such as property tax, professional tax, etc. The income of the *Gram Panchayats* from taxes and other sources is given below:—

Year.	Property tax.	Labour tax. Labour Units.	Cash in lieu of tax.	Subscription and donation.	Supplementary tax.	Fees from *Gram Kutchery.*	Government Grants.	Income from other sources.
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
	Rs.		Rs.	Rs.	Rs.	Rs.	Rs.	Rs.
1958-59	14,522.02	2,24,489 Units.	5,111.52	6,810.55	11,216.70	3,944.99	35,342.70	50,[illegible].70
1959-60	17,913.67	2,31,349 Units.	9,375.79	1,819.53	3,280.62	4,069.69	72,815.17	17,[illegible].91

In the year 1960-61 the income from Property tax, Miscellaneous taxes, Government Grant, Grant under Local Public Works and from other sources was Rs. 26,925.89, 12,456.27, 13,545.50, 33,216.30 and 3,021.80 respectively. In the year 1961-62 the total income of the *Gram Panchayats* was Rs. 31,060.00, Rs. 15,761.68 from Property tax, Rs. 2,054.08 from Miscellaneous taxes, Rs. 12,769.68 from taxes on different property and Rs. 475 from Government Grants.

Organisational Set-up.

The *Gram Panchayats* function under the administrative control of a District Panchayat Officer who is assisted by eleven Panchayat Supervisors. The Supervisors are posted at Saharsa, Supaul, Pipra, Raghopur, Birpur, Madhepura, Murliganj, Kishanganj, Sonbarsa, Alam Nagar and Nirmali. The District Panchayat Officer functions under the District Magistrate, as well as under the Director, Gram Panchayats, Bihar, Patna.

Now a vital change is going to be introduced with the implementation of the Bihar Panchayat Samities and Zila Parishads Act, 1961 in 1964 in four districts, namely, Patna, Bhagalpur, Muzaffarpur and Ranchi and in the remaining districts of Bihar later. Under the Act a *Panchayat Samiti* for a Block is to be constituted and the *Panchayat Samiti* will bear the name of the Block for which it is constituted. The *Panchayat Samiti* will consist of the following members:—

(1) *The Mukhiyas* of all *Gram Panchayats* in the Block; (2) Chairman of Municipalities and Vice-Chairmen of Notified Area Committees in the Block, if any; (3) three representatives of the different Co-operative Societies other than Central Co-operative Bank; (4) one of the members of the Managing Committee of the Central Co-operative Bank; (5) two persons residing in the Block having experience in administration and public life; two women residing in the Block (if not otherwise members) and two persons residing in the Block are to be co-opted.

Every member of the Legislative Assembly of the State, and of the House of People, of the Legislative Council of the State and of the Council of States, residing in the Block will be an associate member of the *Panchayat Samiti* of that Block.

There will be a *Pramukh* and a *Up-Pramukh* for each *Panchayat Samiti* who shall be elected by the members of the *Panchayat Samiti*. If the *Mukhiya* and *Up-Mukhiya* or member of the Executive Committee of a *Gram Panchayat* is elected as *Pramukh*, he shall have to vacate the office of the *Mukhiya* or *Up-Mukhiya* or member of the Executive Committee as the case may be and from such date he will be an additional member of the *Panchayat Samiti* in

his capacity as *Pramukh*. The term of the *Pramukh* or a member is for a period of three years from the date of election. The powers and functions of the *Pramukh* have been defined in section 19 of the Act and the important functions are to convene, preside over and conduct meetings of the *Panchayat Samiti* and to exercise administrative control over the Block Development Officer for the purposes of the implementation of the decisions and resolutions of the *Panchayat Samities*. Under section 20 of the Act the Block Development Officer is to be the Chief Executive Officer of the *Panchayat Samities* and his powers and functions have been defined in section 21 of the Act.

The investigation into the functioning of the *Gram Panchayat* shows that only a few *Gram Panchayats* could do some constructive work. The Diwari Sulindabad *Gram Panchayat* which is at about three miles from Saharsa Railway Station has constructed about eight miles of *kutcha* roads out of voluntary labour offered by the villagers. The rent collection work of this *Panchayat* is also good. Out of total demand of Rs. 20,087.02 this *Panchayat* could collect Rs. 19,421.83 during 1962-63. But this does not represent the average picture. The sanitation work is neglected by most of the *Panchayats*. So far as administration of justice is concerned, the investigation suggests that *Gram Panchayats* are not very successful and sometimes it was observed that litigation is encouraged by the *Gram Panchayats*. The formation of *Gram Panchayats* has, in some cases, led to the formation of two rival groups in the villages.

NOTIFIED AREA COMMITTEES.

Saharsa Notified Area Committee.

Saharsa though a railway junction linking Madhepura and Supaul with the outside world, had limited local importance, being a station of despatch for rice, jute and fish. It was a village with a *dafadar* and few *chaukidars*. From the point of view of Local Self-Government Department, it was under the Bhagalpur District Board.

The administration of areas north of the Ganga from Bhagalpur being a difficult task, this area did not always receive a proper treatment at the hands of Bhagalpur District Board. Consequent upon the partial separation of Saharsa from South Bhagalpur and posting of an Additional District Magistrate at Saharsa, the agitation for separation of Local Self-Government too gained momentum and led to the creation of Saharsa District Board. With the sub-district headquarters functioning at Saharsa, there was development of the old Saharsa village. Departments of Government expanded, a hospital was set up, a market developed and a network of Governmental buildings sprang up. The population of Saharsa went up. The growth of the village and its conversion into a township created

sanitary and health problems and necessitated the creation of Local Self-Government unit at Saharsa. The then Additional District Magistrate, Saharsa, in letter no. 1047, dated 6th March, 1945, submitted his proposal for the creation of a Union Committee at Saharsa. Mr. S. K. Aikat the succeeding Additional District Magistrate objected to the formation of a Union Committee at Saharsa, which was a growing town requiring planned development and construction of roads and buildings and in his letter no. 3174, dated 19th June, 1945, suggested that a Notified Area Committee was the appropriate local body for such a small but growing town. After preliminary investigation and consideration of plans and estimates in their notification no. 4388-L. S.-G., dated 21st May, 1947, the Local Self-Government Department called for objections or suggestions in respect of the proposed creation of Saharsa as a Notified Area under section 388 (1) of the Bihar and Orissa Municipal Act. After a statutory period of publication of such notification, there being no objection or suggestion on the subject, the Saharsa Notified Area was created, vide notification no. 1245-L. S.-G., dated 13th February, 1948, with the following boundary consisting of Saharsa village as a whole with population of 6,500, and the provisions of section 3 of Chapter I, sections 21—27 (both included) of Chapter II, the whole of Chapters III, IV, V, VI, VII, VIII, IX and X, sections 339, 340 and 343—352 of Chapter XI and the whole of Chapters XII and XIII of the Bihar and Orissa Municipal Act were made applicable to this area:—

Boundary.

North—Up to southern edge of the ditch lying south of villages Hoshakpara no. 183 and Duamrail no. 185;

East—Villages Dumrail no. 186, Patuaha no. 187 and Rapnagar no. 188;

West—Villages Nariar no. 190 and Batraha no. 196;

South—Villages Sulindabad no. 197 and Dabjali no. 189.

The first Committee constituted in 1948 had eleven members with the Additional District Magistrate as its Chairman. The term of the first Committee expired on 31st March, 1953 and the fresh Committee was reconstituted, vide Government notification no. M|A3-202|53—5974-L.S.-G., dated Patna, the 16th July, 1953, with three official and six non-official members. Though the term of the Committee had expired in 1958, it has not been reconstituted till now (i.e., May, 1963). The *ex-officio* Chairman of the Committee is District Magistrate, Saharsa, with effect from June. 1954, vide Government notification no. 5690-L. S.-G., dated Patna, the 24th June, 1954. The Secretary of the Committee is an officer of Gazetted rank who at present (May, 1963) is in charge of Nazarat and General Section of Saharsa Collectorate. It may be pointed out that this is

the only Notified Area Committee in this district where both the Chairman and the Secretary are Government officials and where the non-official members have very little to do with its day-to-day administration.

The population of the Notified Area is 14,803 according to 1961 census. The area of the Committee is divided into three wards and there are 1,700 holdings. The jurisdiction of the Committee extends over 5 sq. miles.

Sources of Income.

The first assessment of personal and latrine taxes was given effect to from the second quarter of 1949-50 as per resolution no. 2 of the Committee.

A tax on persons as provided under the Bihar and Orissa Municipal Act, 1922 has been imposed, vide notification no. 2241-L. S.-G., dated 15th February, 1949. Under section 91 of the Bihar and Orissa Municipal Act, 1922, Government buildings and quarters have been assessed at the rate of ten per cent of the annual value of the holdings. The rate is payable by the Government department to whom the building belongs and not by the persons occupying the buildings. The District Board, Saharsa also pays rate as mentioned above to the Notified Area Committee. But up till now (i.e., May, 1963) no rate has been assessed on the Railway buildings and the matter is in correspondence with the State Government and the Railway Department. The figures given below show the amount of arrears due against the Government Departments up to 31st March, 1963.—

Department.	Amount Rs.
1. Police	3,912.52
2. Hospital	2,841.54
3. Power House	4,298.56
4. River Valley Projects	503.35
5. Public works	12,459.04
Total	24,015.01

The arrear up to the tune of Rs. 24,015 from the Government Department is also one of the reasons for poor collection. The annual demand from the rate fixed on the Government and District Board buildings is Rs. 10,092.41 whereas the annual demand on account of personal tax is Rs. 9,230.59 only. The larger source of income of the Saharsa Notified Area Committee is the rates imposed on Government and District Board buildings and any default is bound to affect the work of the Committee.

The latrine tax was levied at the rate of 7½ per cent of the annual value of the holdings, vide notification no. 2241-L. S.-G., dated 15th February, 1949. Besides, the annual registration fees for cycle, bullock cart, pony and rickshaw are Rs. 4, Rs. 8, Rs. 4 and Rs. 10, respectively. The Committee has also imposed tax on dangerous and offensive trades such as trade of kerosene oil, petrol, jute, etc., as provided under the Bihar and Orissa Municipal Act, 1922.

The demand and collection of the Committee are as follows:—

Year.	Demand (in rupees).			Collection (in rupees).
	Arrear.	Current.	Total.	
1949-50	..	6,240	6,240	2,860
1950-51	3,081	9,847	12,928	3,151
1951-52	10.176	9,847	20,023	7,271
1952-53	12,752	9,847	22,599	5,563
1953-54	17,076	9,847	26,923	11,646
1954-55	16,117	12,151	28,268	5,945
1955-56	22,323	13,174	35,497	12,466
1956-57	23,031	13,536	36,567	9,072
1957-58	27,495	13,536	41,031	10,418
1958-59	30,613	13,536	44,149	17,160
1959-60	26,989	24,244	51,233	14,699
1960-61	36,534	24,244	60,778	13,238
1961-62	47,540	24,244	71,784	22,648
1962-63	49,116	24,244	73,360	49,378

The above statistics suggest that prior to 1962-63 the collection has been miserably poor. The Committee has employed one Tax Daroga and one Assistant Tax Daroga to make collection.

The statements showing the income and expenditure of the Committee from 1959-60 to 1962-63 are given below in order to give an accurate idea about its present financial position.

Income (in rupees).

Head.	Year.			
	1959-60.	1960-61.	1961-62.	1962-63.
1. Personal and latrine taxes* ..	15,434	16,131	19,771	19,272
2. Registration fees for cycle ..	673	765	638	581
3. Registration fees for cart ..	1,201	1,141	1,110	1,876
4. Registration fees for pony ..	1,175	888	642	607
5. Registration fees for Rickshaw	528	1,197	997	656
6. Rickshaw drivers' licence fees	100	357	210	70
7. Food licence fees	342	511	313	486
8. Fees on offensive and dangerous trades.	185	1,040	1,432	1,176

* The amount of rate fixed on Government and District Board buildings is also included.

Expenditure (in rupees).

Head.	Year.			
	1959-60.	1960-61.	1961-62.	1962-63.
1. Office Establishment ..	1,652	2,520	2,440	4,107
2. Tax Collection	1,395	2,412	2,454	4,846
3. Sanitation and Public Health	1,202	1,790	787	1,360
4. Road cleansing	2,222	4,359	6.988	8,883
5. Conservancy	4,865	11,936	9,116	12,422
6. Street lighting	2,089	1,875	3,952	8,193
7. Water-supply	Nil	5,119	Nil	134
8. Improvement of roads ..	Nil	1,258	175	4,954

The assessment of holding tax has been made on all the holdings at the rate of 10 per cent of the annual value of the holdings. Objection petitions were called for in the first quarter of 1962-63 and about 700 objections were received by the Notified Area Committee. A sub-committee of five members has been formed to dispose of the objection petitions but hearing has not as yet (May, 1963) been held. The approval of the Government for the rate of holding tax to be levied has also not been received and hence the holding tax has not been imposed. According to the assessment if holding tax is levied it would yield an income of Rs. 40,000 to the Notified Area Committee in place of Rs. 9,230.59 in form of personal tax rates in the district. In all other Notified Area Committees holding tax has been imposed.

It was gathered that a number of latrines have the services of scavengers employed by the Notified Area Committee but no latrine tax is realised. Similarly, there are a few rickshaws which have not been registered, but are plying in the market.

The number of cycles, carts and rickshaws registered in the Committee from 1960-61 to 1962-63 is as follows:—

	No. of cycles.	No. of rickshaws.	No. of carts.
1960-61 ..	180	127	169
1961-62 ..	150	129	261
1962-63 ..	139	89	333

From the above figures it appears that the number of rickshaws has decreased, but the fact is said to be otherwise. The issue of licenses for rickshaws has been restricted and mechanically defective vehicles are taken off the licenses. It is suspected that some of them ply without licenses.

Functions.

Roads.—The Notified Area Committee has at present 1½ miles of metalled road and two miles of *kutcha* road. The expenditure over improvement of and cleansing roads has been given in the statement showing expenditure of the Committee. The Committee has employed fourteen sweepers for cleansing the roads and to collect refuse and garbage and deposit the same in the trenching ground. The Notified Area Committee lacks good roads. There are no proper drains anywhere.

Street lighting.—The total number of electric bulbs provided is 114 besides a few vapour lamps and tube lights and a few kerosene lights. The annual average expenditure over street lighting comes to Rs. 25,000.

Water-Supply.—Arrangement for water-supply appears inadequate. The Committee has provided only 53 hand pumps which supply water. There is a scheme for supply of piped water. There is, however, no scarcity of water because of a number of private wells and a number of deep tube-wells in Government quarters. Outbreaks of fire are generally disastrous.

Sanitation and Conservancy.—The Notified Area Committee has employed 15 scavengers for disposal of night-soil from the latrines. There are about 600 latrines in the Notified Area. All the scavengers have been provided with handcarts to collect night-soil. There is one vehicle for depositing the night-soil in the trenching ground.

There is one Sanitary Inspector and one Vaccinator to take preventive steps against outbreak of epidemics and to look after the sanitation.

The Notified Area Committee has not been entrusted with the management of Primary Education.

Market.—The Committee has not got its own market. The Gudri Market, where vegetables, fishes and articles of daily use are sold, is held on the portion of the railway road and is managed by the Circle Office, Kahra. It is annually leased out.

Murliganj Notified Area Committee.

The Murliganj Notified Area Committee started functioning with effect from December, 1957, vide Government notification no. M|MI-103|56—10304, dated the 14th September, 1957. There are 11 members (two official and nine non-official). The Subdivisional Officer, Madhepura is the *ex-officio* Chairman and a nominated member is the Vice-Chairman of the Notified Area Committee.

The area of the Notified Area Committee is six square miles and is divided into five wards.

The total number of holdings is 750 and the population of the Notified Area according to 1961 census is 9,848 (5,229 males and 4,619 females) persons.

Functions.

Road.—The total length of road is 10 miles out of which two miles constructed by the Public Works Department are metalled and the rest are *kutcha*. The Notified Area Committee has started earth-work for constructing half a mile metalled road in the main market at an estimated cost of Rs. 36,633. The total expenditure over improvement of roads during 1962-63 comes to Rs. 1,354.44. Although the Committee has a good income from the licence fees imposed on jute trade, under section 25 of the Bihar and Orissa Municipal Act, 1922, the Committee has not given good roads for proper movement of vehicles carrying jute.

The roads are in a very poor condition. Even the main road from Murliganj Railway Station to the *bazar* has ditches and slopes with accumulation of water. Due to the bad condition of roads there are no rickshaws. The Committee pleads scarcity of resources to improve the roads or to construct metalled roads.

Water-Supply.—The Notified Area Committee has done nothing so far for the supply of pure water to its people. There are about 207 private wells and 248 private tube-wells. The Block Development Office has supplied 10 tube-wells and three wells were dug out.

In spite of an active trade in jute a highly inflammable commodity there are no arrangements for fire-fighting.

Street lighting.—The Notified Area Committee started to provide street lighting with effect from November, 1958. The total number of electric bulbs and kerosene oil lamps in 1962-63 is 30 and 25 respectively. The expenditure over street lighting in 1962-63 is Rs. 1,150 only. Street lighting is inadequate.

Sanitation.—The Notified Area Committee has not employed any Sanitary or Health Inspector. There are no *pucca* drains and no check on sale of foodstuff on the dusty roadsides.

Conservancy.—The Notified Area Committee has no trenching ground and at present night-soil is deposited near the bank of the river. The practice of disposing of night-soil as head-load is still in practice. But the Government has sanctioned the supply of 16 wheel-barrows at a total cost of Rs. 3,392.96.

Income and expenditure.—The sources of income of the Notified Area Committee are from holding and latrine taxes levied at the rate of 12 and 7½ per cent respectively of the annual value of the

holding. Both the taxes are in effect from 1959-60. Besides the taxes, registration fees for bullock-cart, cycle and pony also constitute a good source of income. The registration fee for cycle, bullock-cart and pony is Rs. 2, Rs. 3 and Rs. 2 per year respectively. The rate of fee for registration of pony was only one rupee up to 31st March, 1963 when it was increased to two rupees.

The statements showing income and expenditure in 1962-63 are given below:—

Income.

Head.	Amount in rupees.
1. Government loan	367
2. Government grant	6,125.96
3. *Government subsidy (Dearness allowance)	12,489
4. Cart registration fee	3,500
5. Cycle registration fee	200
6. Licence fees for effensive and dangerous trade.	7,500
7. Drug Shop licence	45
8. *Hat Khola*	3,200
9. Food stuff licence	600
10. Holding tax	6,000
11. Latrine tax	3,000
12. Animal (i.e. Pony) registration fees ..	400
13. Saleable forms	15
Total ..	43,741.96
Opening balance	18,835.49
Grand Total	62,577.45

Expenditure.

Head.	Amount in rupees.
1. General administration	2,932
2. Collection charges	4,980
3. Public safety	2,370
4. Public Health and Conservancy ..	10,440
5. Rent for office building	50
6. Public convenience	1,701.14
7. Miscellaneous .. .	1,143.25
Total ..	23,619.69

* It includes the amount of 1961-62 also.

The expenditure of the Notified Area Committee is not in keeping with the income. Its income excluding the Government loan, grant and subsidy comes to Rs. 24,760 only when the expenditure was up to the tune of Rs. 23,619.69 in 1962-63.

The collection of holding and latrine taxes has also been poor in 1962-63. The demand and collection are as follows:—

Year.	Name of the tax.	Demand.	Collection.
		Rs.	Rs.
1962-63	Holding tax	10,887.28	1,496.56
	Latrine tax	2,913.00	519.00

The figures of income and expenditure for previous years are not available in the office as it is stated that the records of the Notified Area Committee were burnt when a fire broke out in the office on the 28th November, 1961.

The total assets and liabilities of this Notified Area Committee as they stood on the 31st March, 1962 are about Rs. 40,000 and Rs. 9,000 respectively.

The Notified Area Committee does not appear to discharge its obligations properly. Paucity of income cannot be said to be a ground as the collection of demand appears to be poor. The problems of communications, sanitation and conservancy are becoming more acute as Murliganj has an increasing trade importance because of jute. The development of facilities for better jute trade will augment the resources of the body.

Supaul Notified Area Committee.

The Supaul Notified Area Committee started functioning with effect from 28th January, 1959, vide Government notification no. 796, dated 28th January, 1959. The Committee was constituted originally with ten members but in the month of August, 1959 two more members were added. Out of the total number of twelve members, two are official and the remaining are non-official members. The Subdivisional Officer, Supaul is the *ex-officio* Chairman and a non-official member is the Vice-Chairman. The day-to-day work of the Notified Area Committee is supervised and done by the Vice-Chairman. This is probably one of the best Notified Area Committees in the State and has been praised highly by the Inspecting Officers.

The area of the Notified Area Committee is 8½ square miles and is divided into three wards. There are 2,531 holdings and the population of the Notified Area is 17,460 (9,297 males and 8,163 females) according to the census of 1961.

The office of the Notified Area Committee is housed in a room of the building belonging to District Board, Saharsa for which the Committee pays a nominal rent of Rs. 5 per month. With the expansion of its activities it has become difficult for it to function properly in one room.

At present (May 1963), the staff consists of two clerks, three tax collectors, one health inspector, one overseer, one *amin*, one office peon, five tax peons, two tractor drivers, one cleaner for tractors, one tube-well *mistry*, one lampman, one night guard, thirteen sweepers, sixteen scavengers and four *jamadars*.

Road.—The total length of roads is 17 miles and two furlongs. Out of this about one mile of road is being metalled. The total money spent over the improvement and construction of the roads up till now (i.e., 1962-63) is Rs. 50,634.20.

Water-Supply.—The Committee has installed 71 tube-wells. There are 377 private wells within the Notified Area but a large number of them dry up in summer months. It may be mentioned that a large number of wells were destroyed by Kosi floods. The soil is sandy and sinking of well is not always successful.

The expansion of the town has made the water problem more acute. In April, 1963 the Committee has moved the Government for a grant to work out a scheme of supply of piped water.

Street Lighting.—The total number of electric bulbs and kerosene lamps on the streets and the total expenditure over street lighting during the last four years are as follows:—

Year.	Electric bulbs.	Kerosene oil lamp.	Expenditure (in rupees).
1959-60	130	25	1,870.68
1960-61	125	25	9,447.36
1961-62	132	30	5,572.39
1962-63	141	30	7,027.65

Education.—There are 11 Primary schools and one Middle school under the management of District Superintendent of Education, Saharsa. The Notified Area Committee is corresponding with the authorities concerned for transfer of these schools to it since 1960. It initiated the correspondence, vide letter no. 286, dated 20th September, 1960. In spite of long correspondence since then the Education Department has not yet handed over these schools to it. The Deputy Director, Local Bodies, Bihar, Patna who inspected this Notified Area Committee on 1st October, 1962 has also mentioned in his inspection note that the management of the schools falling under Notified Area Committee should be taken over by it immediately.

Sanitation.—There is a Health Inspector since May, 1960 to look after the sanitation work. Vaccination within the area is done by the Government or the District Board vaccinators.

The Notified Area Committee wants to take up the work of improving roads and the construction of *pucca* drains. At present (May, 1963) the Committee maintains about 17 miles of *kutcha* roads and is constructing 1½ miles of metalled road. There is no *pucca* drain in the town. Every year *kutcha* drains are dug during the monsoon period but they do not serve much purpose and water accumulates on the roads during rains. The Notified Area Committee has not adequate fund to meet the heavy expenditure over the improvement of roads and construction of *pucca* drains which will cost more than a lakh of rupees. Improvement of the communications and the sanitary conditions of the town have to be done through the construction of *pucca* drains and improvement of roads. This work can be done by the Notified Area Committee if it receives co-operation from the Government in shape of granting necessary financial aid for this purpose.

This town has the largest urban population in the district but civic amenities like public garden, town hall, etc., are absent.

Conservancy.—Night-soil is collected by the sweepers as head-load. The Notified Area Committee has received a grant of Rs. 5,175 for purchasing wheel-barrows. The use of wheel-barrows has not yet started. One trenching ground measuring five acres of land has been recently acquired but disposal of night-soil has not been started on this trenching ground as yet. At present (May, 1963) night-soil is deposited in a trenching ground which has been rented.

Markets.—There is one Gudri Market under the management of the Notified Area Committee where vegetables, fish, meat, sweets, grains, fruits, etc., are sold. The annual income from the said market is between Rs. 3,000 and Rs. 4,000.

The Committee in its Resolution no. 4, dated 31st January, 1962 decided to start a weekly cattle market. The market was settled for three years with effect from 1st March, 1962 at Rs. 3,000 and since then it has been functioning. There used to be a big weekly cattle market at Supaul years before.

There is no public garden, town hall or burial ground under the management of the Notified Area Committee. The Committee is contemplating to have a public garden for which it has applied for a loan of Rs. 10,000 to the Government in 1962. No orders have yet been received.

The Notified Area Committee in its Resolution no. 1, dated the 2nd March, 1959, levied holding and latrine taxes at the rate of 9 and 7½ per cent respectively on the annual value of the holding.

which were given effect from 2nd quarter of 1959-60. The statement given below shows the rate of registration fees, date of enforcement of the fees and the number of vehicles registered in 1962:—

Name of the registration fees.	Rate of fees per annum.	Date of enforcement.	Total number of vehicles registered in 1962.
	Rs.		
1. Cart registration fee	8 each	1st April 1959	1,782
2. Cycle registration fee	4 "	Ditto	Nil.
3. Pony registration fee	6 "	Ditto	42
4. Horse (besides pony)	8 "	Ditto	Nil.
5. Ass and Donkey	4 "	Ditto	Nil.
6. Elephant	24 "	Ditto	Nil.
7. Camel	8 "	Ditto	Nil.

Before 1963, there was no rickshaw in this Notified Area Committee. There are now eight rickshaws. The Notified Area Committee has not yet imposed licence fees and the matter is in correspondence with the Government.

The statements showing the income and expenditure of the Notified Area Committee are given below:—

Income.

Head of Income.	1959-60.	1960-61.	1961-62.	1962-63.
1	2	3	4	5
	Rs.	Rs.	Rs.	Rs.
1. Government loan ..	7,000.00	..	833.00	..
2. Government grant ..	4,000.00	..	16,842.00	8,069.00
3. Government subsidy (Dearness allowance).	4,365.00	7,720.00	9,760.00	8,453.00
4. Union tax	4,170.00	..	..	..
5. Rent of roadside lands ..	10,980.70	13,783.81	13,027.51	11,242.88
6. Cart registration fees ..	15,125.76	17,991.36	20,574.47	12,224.47
7. Cycle registration fees ..	150.75	53.50	30.50	..
8. Dangerous and offensive trade licence fees.	2,275.00	1,656.47	4,343.89	4,446.02
9. Miscellaneous (including rent of *Gudri Hat* and *Hathkhola*).	3,815.38	5,021.69	5,933.14	3,973.63
10. Cash received from Union Board.	8,007.48	..	..	..
11. Holding tax	240.55	13,460.91	15,833.21	9,789.12
12. Latrine tax	146.25	7,342.32	4,486.88	4,918.48
13. Animal registration fees ..	100.00	643.75	556.25	62.50
14. Food licence fees ..	484.00	682.50	520.00	1,116.00
15. Saleable forms ..	9.50	.	..	..
16. Uncashed cheque and electric charges.	479.50	2,768.75	17.50	..
17. Pound rent	..	251.00	..	..
18. Rent of *Sabjee Hat* ..	..	..	105.06	2,739.23
19. Rent of *Gudri* and *Hathkhola*	.	..	4,850.00	3,638.10
20. Advance	..	..	..	925.00
Total	58,348.87	71,376.06	97,718.41	71,597.43
Opening balance ..	.	13,706.67	24,027.51	61,546.52
Grand total ..	58,348.87	85,082.73	1,21,745.92	1,33,143.95

Expenditure.

Head of expenditure.	1959-60.	1960-61.	1961-62.	1962-63.
1	2	3	4	5
	Rs.	Rs.	Rs.	Rs.
1. Office establishment ..	3,291.48	3,460.42	8,827.03	2,156.84
2. Collection of taxes ..	3,102.73	4,047.70	3,931.06	3,948.66
3. Sanitation	2,526.01	6,457.78	4,549.54	4,436.69
4. Conservancy	22,418.61	15,355.97	9,844.92	14,819.03
5. Road repairing and construction	5,840.18	6,523.03	9,357.84	28,913.15
6. Street lighting (Kerosene oil lamp).	1,870.68	525.62	674.87	281.25
7. Government subsidy to staff	2,329.00	9,216.20	9,877.07	12,245.40
8. Miscellaneous expenses ..	1,909.64	5,397.64	2,178.81	1,217.77
9. Water-supply	1,349.81	148.58	3,486.26	1,334.53
10. Electric charges ..	..	8,921.74	4,897.52	6,746.37
11. Printing charges of forms and registers.	..	1,000.84	..	682.17
12. Construction cost of *Gudri* market.	..	..	546.00	..
13. Advance	..	.	2,025.00	1,797.60
14. Payment to Government loan	..	..	..	5,607.92
15. Building construction (Remodelling of buffalo house).	..	..	..	1,259.35
16. Expenditure on case ..	..	..	..	821.62
17. Public Health.. ..	..	..	..	921.51
18. Engineering	..	..	..	1,582.92
19. Rent of *Sabjee Hat* ..	..	..	..	6,875.00
20. Purchase of cement ..	..	..	..	741.00
TOTAL .. .	44,638.14	61,055.22	60,196.10	97,389.30

From the above figures of income and expenditure it appears that the Notified Area Committee is progressing gradually. The income was increased from Rs. 58,348.87 in 1959-60 to Rs. 71,597.43 in 1962-63. The collection of taxes and fees is poor as the figures given below show:—

Demand and Collection.

Year.		Demand.	Collection.
		Rs.	Rs.
1959-60	.. ..	23,126.34	809.36
1960-61	.. ..	52,938.38	21,507.82
1961-62	.. ..	62,114.03	21,169.40
1962-63	.. ..	66,375.29	15,058.75

Present Financial Position.—The total assets and liabilities of this Notified Area Committee as they stood on the 31st March, 1962 are Rs. 1,09,405.48 and Rs. 27,224.10 respectively.

Supaul was a centre of business before the Kosi ravages. During the period of the Kosi ravages the business of this place had received a set-back. But now, due to the Kosi embankment this area is reviving its trade. Jute and rice are important business commodities for export.

Licence fee for jute trade is levied on the merchant on the capacity of their godowns and not on the quantity exported as is in vogue in the Murliganj Notified Area Committee. The change-over will augment the resources.

Madhepura Notified Area Committee.

The Madhepura Notified Area Committee replaced the Union Committee and started functioning with effect from 1st April, 1960, vide Government notification no. 3830-L. S.-G., dated Patna, the 21st March, 1960. The Committee was first constituted in 1960-61 with 14 members. Three members were added later. Out of 17 members 14 are non-official and three are official members. The Subdivisional Officer, Madhepura is the *ex-officio* Chairman and a non-official member is the Vice-Chairman. The Vice-Chairman looks after the day-to-day administration. It has jurisdiction over 10 square miles with a population of 11,832 (6,763 males and 5,069 females) persons according to 1961 census. The total number of holdings in the Notified Area is 1,990. The area has been divided into three wards.

Functions.

Roads.—The Notified Area Committee has not constructed any road so far (i.e., May, 1963). However, it is maintaining about 2,000 feet of *kutcha* road constructed by the District Board, Saharsa. The expenditure over improvement of the roads up till now (i.e., 1962-63) comes to Rs. 1,000 only. The town needs metalled roads but due to paucity of fund the Committee has not been able to do this.

Water-Supply.—The Committee has installed 18 tube-wells for water-supply. The figure of private wells is not available in the Committee Office. The number of tube-wells is not adequate. There is no arrangement for fire-fighting although there is a large number of thatched houses.

Street Lighting.—The total number of bulbs and lamps are 105 and 32 respectively. The expenditure over street lighting in 1960-61 and 1961-62 is Rs. 935 and Rs. 7,108.57 respectively. The heavy expenditure in 1961-62 is due to the payment of arrear bills of 1960-61 in 1961-62.

Conservancy and Sanitation.—The Notified Area Committee has employed twelve scavengers for the disposal of the night-soil. It has not got its own trenching ground. The night-soil is deposited on private land on mutual agreement. The night-soil is carried and disposed off by head-load. With a view to do away with this unwholesome practice, the Government has been sanctioning grants to the local bodies for purchase of wheel-barrows. But this Notified Area Committee has not yet received this grant and the matter is in correspondence with the Government. There is no Sanitary Inspector.

The Notified Area Committee maintains a *Gudri* market with effect from 1st April, 1960. The market is annually leased out. In 1960-61, 1961-62, 1962-63 the market was leased out at Rs. 1,600, Rs. 3,700 and Rs. 3,100 respectively. This year (i.e., 1963-64) the market was leased out at Rs. 3,300. The total expenditure over maintaining the market up till now (May, 1963) is about Rs. 3,300. The sanitary condition of the market is not too good.

There is no garden, town hall or burial ground maintained by the Notified Area Committee. It maintains a pound.

Income and Expenditure.

Holding tax, latrine tax, licence and registration fees, rent from market and pound constitute the main sources of income of the Notified Area Committee. The holding and latrine taxes have been imposed at the rate of nine and seven per cent respectively on the annual value of the holding. The annual registration fees for bullock-cart, cycle, pony, and rickshaw are Rs. 6, Rs. 3, Rs. 3, and Rs. 10 respectively. The licence fee for rickshaw driving is Rs. 3 for a year. The Notified Area Committee has also imposed licence fees under section 259 of the Bihar and Orissa Municipal Act, 1922 for carrying out offensive and dangerous trades within its jurisdiction such as storing or selling coal, kerosene oil, petroleum, inflammable oil or spirit, trading in timber, wood, jute, etc. The Notified Area Committee has good income from the trade of jute.

The main items of expenditure are office establishment, street lighting, maintenance of roads and market.

The statement showing income and expenditure is given below:—

Year.	Income.	Expenditure.	Balance.
	Rs.	Rs.	Rs.
1960-61 ..	23,453	16,352	7,101
1961-62 ..	27,681	24,806	2,875

The assets and liabilities as they stood on 31st March, 1962 were Rs. 3,11,235 and Rs. 2,525.25 respectively. This Notified Area Committee is only two years old and during this period it has pushed up its income. For taking up schemes like the construction of *pucca* drain, town hall, improvement of roads, etc., the committee needs financial assistance.

Nirmali Notified Area Committee.

The Committee was constituted with sixteen members, out of whom six are official and ten are non-official members. The Sub-divisional Officer, Supaul is the *Ex-officio* Chairman (who is here represented by the Circle Officer, Nirmali) and a non-official member is the Vice-Chairman. The Committee started functioning from the 4th April, 1962.

The Notified Area Committee has an area of 2.04 square miles and its population is 5,423 (2,843 males and 2,580 females) according to 1961 census. There are 780 holdings.

The Committee was given a loan of Rs. 5,000 by the Government to start working. The Committee had to move cautiously in levying taxes as the people were not used to pay taxes and fees. The holding tax at the rate of 9 per cent of the annual value of the holding has been imposed but the collection during 1962-63 is very poor. Against the total demand of Rs. 7,083.25 on this account only a sum of Rs. 1,713.75 was realised. The registration fees for bullock-cart, cycle and pony at the rate of Rs. 2.37, Rs. 4.37 and Rs. 2.37 have been imposed respectively. The statement showing the income and expenditure of the Notified Area Committee during 1962-63 is given below:—

Income.		Expenditure.	
Head.	Amount.	Head.	Amount.
	Rs.		Rs.
1. Holding tax ..	1,713.75	1. Establishment ..	692.22
2. Cart registration fees .	1,228.00	2. Sanitation ..	2,246.50
3. Pony registration fees ..	44.00	3. Contingency ..	1,075.22
4. Cycle registration fees ..	56.00	4. Street lighting ..	399.41
5. Pound rent ..	491.00	5. House rent .	414.06
6. Loan from Government	5,000.00	6. Road repairing and drain construction.	755.56
		7. Travelling allowance ..	207.04
TOTAL ..	8,532.75	TOTAL ..	5,790.91

From the above figures it is evident that the income of the Notified Area Committee was Rs. 3,532.75 (excluding the Government loan of Rs. 5,000) as against its expenditure of Rs. 5,790.61. This shows that the Committee had a deficit of Rs. 2,257.86 in the very first year of its life (i.e., in 1962-63). The office of the Notified Area Committee has occupied three rooms on a rent of Rs. 60 per month. The Notified Area Committee offices in Supaul, Murliganj and Saharsa are located in one room only. The poor resources do not justify the spending of Rs. 60 per month over rent.

There is a provision under section 259 of the Bihar and Orissa Municipal Act, 1922 for imposing licence fees on offensive and dangerous trades such as sale of kerosene oil, jute, petrol, etc. All Notified Area Committees except this one have been realising the fees but here the fee was not as yet (May, 1963) given effect to. Jute is an important commodity of trade in this area and about one lakh of maunds of jute is exported every year from this town. If licence fee is imposed on it, the income of the Committee will increase a lot.

In the interest of the Notified Area Committee it seems essential to impose fees on offensive and dangerous trades including jute. It was also found that a number of cycles and carts have not been registered. If all the cycles and carts are registered it will yield some income to the Notified Area Committee.

Functions.

Road.—The Committee manages 18,184 ft. of roads. The condition of the roads beggars description. The topography of the area increases accumulation of water. It may be mentioned that in heavy rains even boats ply in the area. In May, 1963 it was observed that vegetables were sold on both sides of a ditch on the road containing filthy water and abode of mosquitoes.

Conservancy and Sanitation.—The Notified Area Committee has employed five sweepers and one *jamadar* to keep the roads clean. With the present (1963) condition of the roads it is not possible to keep them clear. There does not seem to be much justification for the expenditure when the Committee does not arrange for the removal of night-soil.

Street lighting.—The Notified Area Committee has provided only four patromaxes which is quite inadequate. No lamps have been provided in the lanes. The town is to get the supply of electricity soon and the Notified Area Committee proposes to provide electric bulbs on the streets. But the present financial position of the Committee raises doubt if it will be able to bear the expenses thereof.

Water-Supply.—As regards water-supply, the Notified Area Committee maintains only four tube-wells and six surface wells. Previously, they were under the management of the District Board, Saharsa. There is no scarcity of water and there are a number of private wells. There are no arrangements for fighting fires.

The crying need of the town is the improvement of roads and construction of *pucca* drain. But at this stage the Notified Area Committee is not in a position to do this and hence this can be done only with the co-operation of the Government in shape of granting suitable fund for this purpose. In order to increase the income of the Committee imposition of licence fee on offensive and dangerous trades and latrine tax is very essential. The Committee needs careful nourishing and economic planning.

TOWN PLANNING AND PUBLIC HEALTH.

No town planning has yet been taken up for any of the towns of the district. For areas controlled by the Notified Area Committees, site and house plans are submitted by the person who wants to construct a house and the Chairman approves on the recommendation of the members of the Committee.

The four important towns of the district, namely, Saharsa, Supaul, Madhepura and Murliganj require town planning. Saharsa so far has not had a haphazard growth but with more urbanisation this is likely to come in. The three other towns are quite congested and have been allowed to grow in a lop-sided manner. There is a proposal for a town planning for Saharsa. It is understood that nothing tangible has yet been done.

CHAPTER XIV.

EDUCATION AND CULTURE.

PROGRESS OF EDUCATION.

The District of Saharsa, which was a sub-district since 1944 within the district of Bhagalpur for all administrative purposes, gained the status of a full-fledged district on the 1st April, 1954. For the purposes of educational administration, it was separated from Bhagalpur district in the year 1949.

Regarding progress of education it is mentioned in W. W. Hunter's *Statistical Account of Bengal* (Vol. XIV), 1871 that there was one aided Middle English school at Madhepura and two unaided schools at Sonbarsa and Supaul. Byrne in the *Old Gazetteer of Bhagalpur* had mentioned that education though making considerable progress was in a backward condition*.

The statistics below for Saharsa district from 1950-51 to 1961-62 supplied by the Education office at Saharsa indicate the progress of education:—

Year.			No. of schools.	No. of scholars.
1950-51	..	..	749	44,319
1951-52	..	..	756	44,496
1952-53	..	..	876	44,961
1953-54	..	..	943	53,968
1954-55	..	..	1,045	54,670
1955-56	..	..	1,075	61,906
1956-57	..	..	1,175	70,542
1957-58	..	..	1,302	79,900
1958-59	..	..	1,375	1,15,451
1959-60	..	..	1,408	1,32,138
1960-61	..	..	1,482	1,42,723
1961-62	..	..	1,520	1,48,185

The schools included in the above table are of various types, i.e., primary, middle, secondary and girls' schools.

Apart from the progress in education through the conventional line of teaching there has been a number of institutions for imparting what has come to be known as basic education and social education.

* Byrne's *District Gazetteer of Bhagalpur* (p. 154).

Seventy-six basic schools and two hundred and ninety-nine social education centres are now functioning in the district. The system of basic education was introduced in the district in 1949 on an experimental basis at Madhukarchak and Rajinbabhangama in Madhepura subdivision. Crafts, agriculture, manual work and physical training find an important place in the syllabus and extra-curricular activities are given prominence.

A comprehensive rural uplift programme is sought to be implemented through basic schools and social education centres. This programme consists of (1) rural cleanliness, (2) social uplift work, (3) demonstration of the scientific agricultural and cottage industries developments, (4) processes showing how science may be correlated to these operations with marked success, (5) disinfection of wells, (6) providing social recreation to the communities, (7) developing their aesthetic faculties, (8) utilisation of compost pits, urinals and trench latrines and (9) relief work through *khadi* production. It cannot, however, be said that basic education has been popular or has struck roots in spite of a large sum annually spent by the State over this. This system of education has been recently severely criticised by some of the scholars.

So far social education is concerned, originally it was started as a mass literacy drive in 1938-39. The mass literacy campaign and adult education drive have come to be known as the Social Education Scheme. Through the social education centres it is expected that illiteracy will disappear and there will be a general social uplift. The Community Development Project and Blocks have taken up this work actively. The objective is great, no doubt, but it is not known how far the objective has been successful. No appraisal was made

It may be noted that there have been certain important changes in the field of education in recent years in the State and Saharsa has not been an exception. The District Board has been absolved of its responsibility to impart education to a great extent and this task has been taken over by the State. This scheme was implemented in Saharsa in May, 1957. The District Education Fund was put under the District Superintendent of Education. Regarding stipendiary and aided schools the power of the District Board has been almost reduced to nullity. The record of the progress of education under the District Board was not good although large figures of schools and scholars used to be reported. In most of the schools there were complaints of various types and that is why the change in the control and administration was made.

There have also been some changes in the field of secondary education. Higher Secondary course was introduced in 1958 in the district and seven schools have been converted into higher secondary schools. The higher secondary schools will now teach up to the first

year standard of Intermediate classes and the colleges will have only three years' degree course. It is expected that more and more of the better managed secondary schools will be raised to this status.

INCIDENCE OF LITERACY.

Regarding the incidence of literacy in the distiict it may be mentioned that the overall percentage of literacy for both males and females during 1951 and 1961 was 8.86 and 13.75 respectively. Among females, only 3.89 per cent were literate and 96.11 per cent illiterate while, among males 23.05 were literate and 76.95 per cent were illiterate according to 1961 census. It may be noted that though the number of primary schools increased in the villages, only the younger generation benefited from them while the adults who were illiterate or semi-literate remained almost where they were in spite of the recently started adult education centres. It is generally found that for the average small cultivator, a young boy is an assistance in the field, and so the father does not seem to be very keen for schooling for the boy specially where the school is at some distance from the village. This is all the more true in the case of young girls who do not go long distances unescorted. But there has been some change. In the two Five-Year Plans 807 schools and 248 social education centres have been started and their number will considerably increase in the Third-Five Year Plan.

The spread of education in Saharsa district may be reviewed in the background of the spread of education in the State and in the country. According to 1961 census, the percentage of literacy and education in Bihar works out to 18.4 for the total population, 29.8 per cent for the male population and 6.9 per cent for the female population, as against all-India averages of 24.0 per cent, 34.4 per cent and 12.9 per cent respectively. The spread of education in Bihar cannot be said phenomenal and in fact, there are only four States in India, viz., Uttar Pradesh, Madhya Pradesh, Rajasthan and Jammu and Kashmir which have lower literacy rates.

According to 1961 census among the districts of Bihar, Saharsa has a lower incidence of literacy in the State. Patna tops the list with the percentages of 28.7 per cent, 43.5 per cent and 13.0 per cent respectively for total males and females literacy. The district of Champaran is at the bottom with only 13.2 per cent literates, Palamau with 19.6 per cent and Saharsa with 13.75 per cent.

Table D. VII in the *District Census Handbook of Saharsa* (1951) gives the district total of livelihood classes by educational standards*. Obviously these figures also include persons of other district who were found in Saharsa district on the day of census. The figures are given later.

* Extract from *District Census Handbook*, pp. 73-74.

In this table 'Literates' are the persons who can read and write but have not passed the middle or any higher examination. The number of persons who have passed the middle and higher examination has been shown separately for each grade or standard:—

Educational standards.		Persons.	Males.	Females.
1. Literates ..	..	1,01,854	93,616	8,238
2. Middle school	..	5,592	5,207	385
3. Matriculate	..	1,272	1,195	77
4. Intermediate	..	212	194	18
5. Graduate	..	104	100	4
6. Post-Graduate	..	16	16	Nil
7. Teaching ..	..	442	430	12
8. Engineering	..	3	3	Nil
9. Commerce ..	..	1	1	Nil
10. Legal ..	..	65	65	Nil
11. Medical ..	..	138	133	5
12. Others ..	..	58	58	Nil

From the statistics it is apparent that in the technical branches of education like Engineering and Commerce, women take little interest. The main career for educated women appears to be that of teachers and doctors. The category 'others' include those who have passed examination, such as, *Prathma, Madhyama, Sahityaratna, Visharad, Alim-Fazil,* etc. It cannot be said that the picture of literacy and education against the background of the total population is encouraging.

Low incidence of literacy.

The incidence of literacy is low although this district at one time had a high development of literature and philosophy. The constant Kosi floods, the epidemics, the consequent insecurity of life—all have contributed to this. Bad communications, want of employment chances within the district stood on the way of opening of schools and colleges. Even now the only high school for girls in the district at Saharsa town has less than 100 students (1963). The Maithil Brahmins and the Goalas who predominate the population are full of their past tradition but were not very keen till of late to turn to literacy and education.

EDUCATION AMONG THE SCHEDULED CASTES, SCHEDULED TRIBES AND BACKWARD CLASSES.

The population of the Scheduled Castes, Scheduled Tribes and Backward Classes in the entire district based on the report of 1951 census of the District Census Handbook, Saharsa, published in 1956 at pages 66—68 was as follows:—

		Males.	Females.	Total.
Scheduled Castes	..	1,02,494	1,02,308	2,04,802
*Scheduled Tribes	..	14,997	13,369	28,366
Backward Classes	..	1,47,303	1,38,361	2,85,664

* The population of the Scheduled Tribes in 1961 Census is below 8,000 and obviously some mistake has been done. No reasonable explanations have been forthcoming either from the District Magistrate or the Census office.

The total population of Saharsa district according to 1951 census is 13,08,198. The population of the three categories above comes to 39 per cent of the total population.

They are distributed all over the district. For the welfare of the Scheduled Castes, Scheduled Tribes and Backward Classes the State Government have appointed one District Welfare Officer, one Assistant Welfare Officer and 16 Welfare Inspectors in 1954. These officers have the responsibility for the spread of education among the Scheduled Castes and Tribes and the Backward Classes.

The State Government have arranged to give students of these categories, stipends, exemption from school fees and book grants.

The following table supplied by the District Education Office at Saharsa gives the data in connection with the progress of special schools, i.e., primary schools for these classes of students:—

*Schools for Scheduled Castes.**

Years.			No. of schools.	No. of scholars.
1958-59	..	..	27	2,189
1959-60	..	..	29	2,272
1960-61	..	..	30	2,318
1961-62	..	..	33	2,303

Out of thirty-three primary schools, six are located in Sadar subdivision, fifteen in Madhepura subdivision and twelve in Supaul subdivision.

Schools for Scheduled Tribes.

Years.			No. of schools.	No. of scholars.
1958-59	..	..	4	253
1959-60	..	..	4	258
1960-61	..	..	4	242
1961-62	..	..	4	249

The schools are located at villages Khara, Budhma, Sheikhpur, Rasalpur Dhuriaya and Sunderpur.

Schools for Backward Muslims.

Years.			No. of schools.	No. of scholars.
1958-59	..	..	8	473
1959-60	..	..	8	470
1960-61	..	..	8	476
1961-62	..	..	8	483

The schools are located at villages Bhairopatti, Itwa, Babu Asthan, Muglaghat, Nandana Mangwara, Bhatkhora, Rahmatganj and Majhoua.

There is no special school for boys of Backward Hindu Community. Besides the above enrolment the number of students in general schools and colleges numbered about 15,733 including

* The Bantars, a scheduled caste was studied and it was found that the incidence of literacy and education was practically nil (P. C. R. C.).

girls in 1961-62. Students belonging to the above classes and the Backward Hindu Communities are awarded special scholarships and book grants from the Welfare Department.

As regards schools for the said communities it may be mentioned that they are located in pockets where these castes and tribes have a good population. In the schools for Scheduled Tribes, only the tribal children are allowed to take admission. But there is no such restriction in the Harijan schools at Bhairopatti, Rahmatganj, Rasalpur Dhuriaya, Sukhpur and Jhara.*

There are general scholarships for which selected pupils of middle and primary schools compete. There are 79 scholarships awarded by the District Board for boys and girls termed as lower primary scholarship valued at Rs. 3 per mensem tenable for two years. Besides, there are merit-*cum*-poverty scholarship numbering 87 for students reading in VI to XI classes at the rate of Rs. 10 for middle schools and Rs. 5 for high schools.

The following statement of stipends granted by the Welfare Department to the students of Scheduled Castes, Scheduled Tribes and Backward Muslims has been obtained from the District Welfare Office:—

Scheduled Tribes.

Years.	No. of stipends.	Total expenditure incurred. Rs.
1958-59	108	11,569
1959-60	113	12,412
1960-61	129	14,364
1961 62	152	17,712

Scheduled Castes.

Years.	No. of stipends.	Total expenditure incurred. Rs.
1958-59	596	59,342
1959-60	609	62,431
1960-61	628	68,664
1961-62	918	131,320

Backward Muslims.

Years.	No. of stipends.	Total expenditure incurred. Rs.
1958-59	292	43,575
1959-60	302	47,430
1960-61	317	51,300
1961-62	501	62,580

PRIMARY EDUCATION.

Primary education consists of teaching through the mother tongue in classes I to V of the age-group 6 to 11 years. It may be noted that separate figures for primary schools for Saharsa district before

* There has been an unaccountable drop in the population of the Scheduled Tribes in 1961—a matter discussed elsewhere. The District Officer has not got village-wise population figures.

1951 are not available. But it cannot be denied that there has been some progress in the incidence of primary education. In 1953-54 two important steps were taken. The first is the enforcement of the Expansion Improvement Programme Scheme which helped the problem of the educated unemployed and established schools in the district on an equitable distribution basis keeping in view the areas and the number of population for whom these schools were meant. The second is the promulgation of the Local Self-Government Amending and Validating Act, 1954, which put an end to the dual system of administration in the field of education to a considerable extent. Before 1954 the primary schools were controlled both by the local bodies and officers of the Education Department. The powers of the local bodies in the matter of payment, etc., were vested with the District Superintendent of Education (Elementary) who was later designated as the District Superintendent of Education.

Several schemes, namely, the Expansion Improvement Programme, introduction of intensive teaching of craft in middle schools, etc., were in operation during 1954. Under the Expansion Improvement Programme, new schools (primary and middle) are opened.

Under intensive teaching of the crafts in middle school it is reported that about nine middle schools have been provided with the facility of teaching crafts (1963). The view in general was to permit equal facility to one and all in matter of education. All these factors contributed to a great rise in the number of primary schools during the years 1961 and 1962.

The following table supplied by the District Education Office shows the trend of primary education in the district from 1950-51 to 1961-62:—

Years.	No. of schools.			No. of scholars.			No. of teachers.		
	Boys.	Girls.	Total.	Boys.	Girls.	Total.	Males.	Females.	Total.
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
1950-51 ..	635	34	669	35,798	1,747	37,545	1,378	312	[illegible]
1951-52 ..	643	36	679	35,852	1,790	37,642	1,381	314	[illegible]
1952-53 ..	742	35	777	39,054	1,250	40,304	1,401	321	[illegible]
1953-54 ..	789	40	829	41,345	1,528	42,873	1,432	323	1,755
1954-55 ..	858	54	912	41,924	1,549	43,473	1,539	390	[illegible]
1955-56 ..	885	59	944	48,816	2,189	51,005	1,517	[illegible]	[illegible]
1956-57 ..	944	68	1,012	55,877	2,781	58,658	1,578	550	[illegible]
1957-58 ..	982	72	1,054	56,997	10,537	67,534	[illegible]	613	[illegible]
1958-59 ..	1,091	82	1,173	77,737	18,668	96,405	1,641	[illegible]	[illegible]
1959-60 ..	1,140	88	1,228	89,155	21,188	1,10,343	1,651	621	[illegible]
1960-61 ..	1,202	89	1,291	93,988	22,170	1,16,158	1,955	[illegible]	[illegible]
1961-62 ..	1,185	110	1,295	95,504	22,295	1,17,799	1,966	741	2,707

During the First and Second Five-Year Plans there had been great improvement in the primary education in the district. The number of primary schools had increased considerably, upgrading of lower primary schools into upper primary schools had been effected in sufficient numbers, funds had been sanctioned for the construction of new buildings and renovation of existing ones. The scale of salary of teachers had been upgraded. The scheme of appointment of lady teachers in primary schools was sanctioned and qualified ladies had been appointed in primary schools.* According to the announcement of State Government in 1949, education up to primary stage was made free throughout the State.

Compulsory primary education had been introduced at Kahra, Chatapur and Uda Kishanganj during 1960-61. In 1961-62 the percentage of boys attending schools as compared to the children of school going age comes to about 20 per cent. The percentage of boys attending the school is not very inspiring. Compulsory primary education has not evoked a proper response from the common man. The economic condition of the poorer people stands on the way. Many of the children near about ten years of age work for supplementing the family income. The schools are managed by State Government and the District Superintendent of Education is the controlling authority at district level.

Middle Schools.

The middle schools has also recorded a steady expansion in the district. Till 1911 the middle schools were divided into two classes, (*a*) Middle English schools, i.e., schools teaching up to middle scholarship examination in which English formed a part of the course and (*b*) middle vernacular schools, i.e., schools which taught up to middle scholarship examination but where English was not taught. After 1911 such distinction of middle schools came to an end and there were no middle vernacular schools.

The old figures are not available, hence the figures from 1950 supplied by the Education Department have to be looked into.

It may be noted that the control of middle schools was entirely transferred to the District Board in 1925 in Bihar but after the promulgation of the Amending and Validating Local Self-Government Act in 1954. the District Superintendent of Education in the district had been made responsible for the control, management and payment to middle and primary schools in District Board area. The control of such schools by the Local Board of the respective subdivision did not have a salutary effect and was rightly terminated. A District Education Fund was opened in 1954 in which the contribution of the District Board and Education Department were pooled

* This scheme is being found very difficult to accomplish for want of suitable ladies.

together and from it expenditure was incurred. A District Planning Committee was set up in 1954 with the District Magistrate as the President and the District Superintendent of Education as the Secretary and members nominated by the Education Department. The Committee was made responsible for the opening of new schools, appointment of teachers and other work relating to the expansion of middle and primary schools in the district.

The following table supplied by the District Education Office shows the expansion of the middle schools during 1950-51 to 1961-62:—

Year.	No. of schools.			No. of scholars.			No. of teachers.		
	Boys.	Girls.	Total.	Boys.	Girls.	Total.	Males.	Females.	Total.
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
1950-51 ..	54	1	55	3,993	255	4,248	312	10	322
1951-52 ..	57	2	59	4,045	267	4,312	318	13	331
1952-53 ..	76	3	79	5,103	377	5,480	345	11	356
1953-54 ..	90	3	93	6,327	457	6,784	319	12	331
1954-55 ..	97	3	100	6,473	264	6,737	292	8	300
1955-56 ..	103	4	107	6,855	204	7,059	329	14	343
1956-57 ..	111	4	115	7,799	279	8,078	383	17	400
1957-58 ..	110	4	114	7,943	504	8,447	403	19	422
1958-59 ..	115	5	119	10,241	641	10,882	443	27	470
1959-60 ..	124	6	130	11,901	789	12,690	442	28	470
1960-61 ..	131	6	137	13,595	920	14,515	492	34	526
1961-62 ..	147	9	156	13,702	1,110	14,812	498	41	539

SECONDARY EDUCATION.

The establishment of Universities in 1857 had far-reaching consequence on secondary education.

Certain specific defects had grown out of the system of secondary education in vogue during the years 1854—1882—the mother tongue was completely neglected as a medium of instruction, nothing was done to train teachers for the secondary schools, and the course of study became too academic and unrelated to life mainly because there was no provision for vocational or technical courses. One further defect that had then taken concrete shape was that the Matriculation examination began to dominate, not only secondary education but even the education imparted in primary schools.

In 1882 an Education Commission known as the "Hunter Commission" was appointed by the Government to report on the

entire question of education in the country. The Commission was directed to enquire into the quality and character of the instruction imparted in schools.

Since it was very costly for the Government to maintain secondary schools it was thought that the entire responsibility of primary education should be taken over by the Government and the secondary education should be left more to private enterprise. The Commission recommended that secondary education should be provided on the grant-in-aid basis and that the Government should withdraw as early as possible from the direct management of secondary schools. The recommendations were not, for some reason or other, implemented.

During 1882—1902 there was a considerable expansion in the field of secondary education. It was partly due to the enthusiasm of private enterprise and partly to the system of grant-in-aid. There was a distinct shift in the society to receive western education and more through the medium of English language.

The system of education in vogue, however, made the problem of unemployment all the more acute as the Universities were thrown open to all types of students without any screening and most of those who passed through the Universities were more fit for white collared jobs only. Technical education is at a low premium and manual labour has come to be despised. In later years attempts were made to meet this problem. From time to time different committees have been formed at various levels to go into this question. One of them was the University Education Commission in 1948 under the Chairmanship of Dr. S. Radhakrishnan. The Commission recommended that the standard of admission to University courses should correspond to that of the present Intermediate examination, i.e., after 12 years of the study at the school and Intermediate college. The Commission thought that neither the public nor the Government had realised the importance of Intermediate colleges in the Indian educational system, and remarked that "our secondary education remains the weakest link in our education machinery and needs urgent reinforcement". Till the formation of the Secondary School Examination Board in 1951 all the secondary schools were under the control of Patna University and the Matriculation examination was conducted by Patna University.

There has been an improvement in the incidence of secondary education if the number of schools and scholars indicate improvement. The old statistics indicating the progress of secondary education are unfortunately not available. The figures from 1950-51 to 1961-62 supplied by the District Education Office have to be looked into for appreciating the expansion. It may be mentioned that in the Second Five-Year Plan period, seven high schools were converted into higher secondary and multi-purpose schools.

The following table supplied by the Education Office shows the expansion of schools for secondary education from 1951-52 to 1961-62:—

Years.	No. of schools.			No. of scholars.			No. of teachers.		
	Boys.	Girls.	Total.	Boys.	Girls.	Total.	Males.	Females.	Total.
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
1950-51 ..	16	Nil	16	2,504	12	2,516	146	Nil	146
1951-52 ..	18	Nil	18	2,527	15	2,542	148	Nil	148
1952-53 ..	20	Nil	20	4,179	18	4,197	200	Nil	200
1953-54 ..	21	Nil	21	4,304	12	4,316	199	Nil	199
1954-55 ..	23	Nil	23	4,445	15	4,460	212	Nil	212
1955-56 ..	24	Nil	24	3,828	14	3,842	269	Nil	269
1956-57 ..	30	Nil	30	3,786	20	3,806	272	Nil	272
1957-58 ..	29	Nil	29	3,876	43	3,919	273	Nil	273
1958-59 ..	37	1	38	5,625	91	5,716	284	5	289
1959-60 ..	44	1	45	6,617	121	6,738	281	6	287
1960-61 ..	45	2	47	9,095	208	9,303	280	13	293
1961-62 ..	59	3	62	9,436	185	9,621	281	21	302

Higher Secondary and Multi-purpose Education.

The higher secondary school is the latest type of institution covering a course of education for a period of 3 years and in some cases that of 4 years, depending upon the period of nature and course of the study. The higher secondary schools have been formed by the addition of one year which is taken from the period of Intermediate stage of the University.

Under memo. no. II|54-05|58-F—1451, dated the 8th May, 1958, the State Government accepted the recommendations of the Secondary Education Commission including the conversion of high schools into higher secondary schools for the introduction of diversified courses in such schools. The Government selected 25 Government and 22 non-Government high schools for conversion into multi-purpose higher secondary and higher secondary schools respectively. There is difference between a higher secondary school and a multi-purpose school. In a multi-purpose school diversified courses are followed

and different crafts are taught. The idea is to make it a craft-centred school which a higher secondary school is not. The State Government insists on some conditions on the fulfilment of which non-Government higher secondary and multi-purpose schools will be granted recognition. These conditions refer to the financial condition, strength of the pupils, the area served, management and control, etc.

The following schools have been recognised by the Government as higher and multi-purpose schools from 1958 to 1962:—

(1) William Multi-purpose School (Supaul), (2) Multi-purpose Higher Secondary School (Madhepura), (3) Harawat Raj Higher Secondary School (Ganpatganj), (4) B. L. Higher Secondary School (Murliganj), (5) Multi-purpose Kosi Higher Secondary School (Birpur), (6) Multi-purpose Zila School (Saharsa) and (7) Sarvodaya Multi-purpose School (Murliganj).

The following table supplied by the District Education Office shows the progress of higher secondary schools including multi-purpose schools from 1958-59 to 1961-62:—

Years.			No. of schools.	No. of scholars.	No. of teachers.
1958-59	..	..	5	2,453	81
1959-60	..	..	5	2,467	87
1960-61	..	..	7	2,747	109
1961-62	..	..	7	2,903	114

History of some of the important institutions.

Multi-purpose Higher Secondary School, Madhepura.

This school was established as a high school in 1896. It is one of the oldest schools in Bihar and has been the nursery of education in this district. It has at present (1963) about 351 students and 12 teachers. The school has its own building and a good library. It has also a wing of National Cadet Corps and Auxiliary Cadet Corps unit for the students.

Priyavarta High School, Panchgachia.

This school situated at village Panchgachia is the second oldest higher class institution in the district established in 1917 by Shri Priyavarta Narain Singh, ex-*zamindar* of the village. In 1963, it has 358 students including one girl student and 19 teachers. It has its own building, playing-ground and a good library.

Manohar Higher Secondary School, Saharsa.

It was established in 1929 in the name of Mr. M. G. Hallet, the ex-Commissioner of Bhagalpur Division. It was taken over by

the Government in August, 1956. Prior to 1959 it was a High English School. In August 1959 it was converted as Government Zila school. In 1963, it has 425 students and 20 teachers. It has also N. C. C. and A. C. C. units. It has its own building, playing-ground and a good library. Rai Bahadur Manohar Lal was the chief donor of the school. The name of the school was changed.

Bangaon High School, Bangaon.

This school was started in 1945 in Bangaon. In 1963 it has 454 students and 18 teachers.

The standard of students that are turned out has been criticised severely of late. Discipline is mostly a casualty. Many of the schools are ill-equipped, badly staffed and the students of a poor calibre. It is commonly complained that the system of education is not very helpful. The serious problem is engaging the attention of the Government and the public. That the academic standards both for higher secondary and college education have been considerably diluted is an accepted fact and it is now realised that the courses of higher education should be available only for those who are qualified by ability and attainment to pursue them and who wish to do so.

Government Girls' High School, Saharsa.

This school was started in 1956 as a private institution at Saharsa with only ten students. Shri S. K. Sinha, Ex-District Magistrate of Saharsa, Shri Manohar Lal Tekriwal, Shri Brajeshwar Mallick, Ex-Deputy Magistrate took keen interest in sponsoring the school. The first Headmistress was Shrimati Mohini Sinha. Contributions were received from several merchants and cinema owners for running the school at the initial stage. The school was taken over by the Education Department in 1958 and a new building near the court is under construction (1963). It has 84 students and 3 teachers in 1963. It has an A. C. C. unit and a good library.

Mission School, Saharsa.

This Christian Mission School was established in 1906 at Saharsa. It teaches up to middle school standard. It has 200 students and four teachers. It has its own building and a library. It is a very well run school and is in great contrast to the ill-equipped institutions so common in the district.

State Subsidised Multi-purpose School, Birpur.

Started in 1955 at Birpur, this school is maintained by the Kosi Project Department. In 1963 it has 475 students including 25 girl students and 15 teachers. It has its own building, playing-ground and a good library. It has the units of National Cadet Corps and Auxiliary Cadet Corps for the students. It has a hostel which accommodates about 120 students. The results since the inception of the institution have been very good. It is one of the best run schools in Bihar.

UNIVERSITY EDUCATION.

Patna University had jurisdiction over all the colleges of the State of Bihar before the formation of the Bihar University. Patna University was an affiliating University. Even before the formation of the Bihar Secondary School Examination Board, Patna University used to conduct the Matriculation Examination. But since the number of schools and colleges increased, the Bihar Secondary School Examination Board was constituted in 1951 with the responsibility of conducting Matriculation Examination. Later the work of Patna University was bifurcated between two Universities, viz., Patna and Bihar Universities in 1951. Patna University was given its jurisdiction over the colleges within the area covered by the Patna Municipal Corporation and became a sort of a residential-*cum*-teaching University. Bihar University had its headquarters at Patna and was created more to be an affiliating University and had jurisdiction over all the colleges of the State of Bihar excepting that of Patna, but including the Veterinary College and the Commerce College situated in the neighbourhood of Patna City but outside the municipal limits.

In 1960 two more Universities were created, namely, Ranchi University with its jurisdiction over the whole of Chotanagpur Division and the Bhagalpur University with jurisdiction over the whole of Bhagalpur Division. In 1962 one more University, namely, Magadh University with headquarters at Gaya was started. The jurisdiction is over the whole of Gaya district and the colleges of Patna and Shahabad districts which lie outside the New Capital area. The headquarters of Bihar University was shifted to Muzaffarpur in 1960. Now all the four divisions of the State have an University at the divisional headquarters and the headquarters of the fifth University is in a district town.

The four colleges in the district are now affiliated to Bhagalpur University with headquarters at Bhagalpur.

Saharsa College.

This college at Saharsa town was established in July, 1952 with only 94 students and four lecturers. Rai Bahadur Manohar Tekriwal of Saharsa, Pandit Rajendra Mishra, the present President of Bihar Pradesh Congress Committee gave donations to start the college and Shri M. B. Mukherjee, Ex-Additional District Magistrate collected a handsome amount. The college was granted affiliation up to I. A. standard by the Old Patna University in the faculty of Arts. At the time of the creation of Saharsa district this was the only college in the district. The affiliation was extended up to B.A. standard in 1956-57 and Science teaching was introduced in July, 1957. This college is now affiliated up to degree standard in the faculty of Arts and Science. Honours teaching had also been started in English, Economics, Hindi and Political Science since 1961-62. The college

has introduced a department of classical music and one music instructor has been appointed to take music classes for the boys and girls of this college. Three years' degree course was introduced in the college in 1959-60. The college has its own land and building. The college has a fairly large library. The college has various societies for extra-curricular and sporting activities. A college magazine is also published. There are about 785 students including 27 girls and 29 lecturers including one lady lecturer. The college has units of National Cadet Corps and National Cadet Corps Rifles. There are four National Cadet Corps Officers and 660 cadets have been enrolled.

Thakur Prasad College, Madhepura.

This college at Madhepura was established in 1954 with 136 students and five lecturers. Shri Thakur Prasad, a businessman gave donations for this college. It was started as an Intermediate college. The affiliation was extended up to the degree course in Arts in 1957. Three years' degree course was introduced in the college in 1960. The college has a fairly large library. There are about 475 students including 25 girls. The college has a unit of National Cadet Corps Rifle.

Uda Kishanganj College, Kishanganj.

This college was established in 1957 at Kishanganj. It was started as an Intermediate college but was admitted to degree course in the faculty of Arts in 1959. There are about 275 students and 13 lecturers. The college has a small library.

Supaul College, Supaul.

This college was established in 1959 at Supaul with the efforts of Bharat Sewak Samaj and others. The Bharat Sewak Samaj collected about ten thousand rupees to start this college. The college is imparting education up to the degree standard in the faculty of Arts. There are about 335 students and 15 lecturers. The college has a small library.

The four colleges in the district have been turning out graduates but the standard is very poor. The colleges are not well-equipped and not well-staffed generally. Some of the subjects have only one lecturer. The tutorial system is not emphasised. The contact with the teacher and the taught does not go much beyond the classes. Sense of discipline is very poor. The investigator found examinations being held under police protection as teachers detecting corrupt practices among boys had been threatened. The students are fond of travelling without tickets and resent if pulled up. The teachers have had politics of their own and practically no one thinks of research. Writing of note books or text-books and private tuition or getting examinership are unfortunately the aim of most of the teachers.

BASIC EDUCATION.

The object of basic education system at the elementary stage is to impart education through socially useful productive activities like spinning, weaving, gardening, carpentry, leather work, book craft, domestic craft, pottery, elementary engineering, etc. It was introduced in the district in 1949 and two basic schools were started at Madhukarchak and Rajinbabhangama in Madhepura subdivision.

The basic institutions are controlled by the District Education Officer, whereas the Deputy Superintendent of Basic Education supervises the basic institutions and is the technical adviser to the District Education Officer.

With the implementation of the Expansion Improvement Programme Scheme in 1953-54, some traditional schools were also converted into basic institutions and some new basic schools were also started.

The following table supplied by the District Education Officer shows the apparent expansion of these schools which include both senior basic and junior basic:—

Years.		No. of schools.		No. of scholars.		No. of teachers.	
		Junior basic.	Senior basic.	Junior basic.	Senior basic.	Junior basic.	Senior basic.
1		2	3	4	5	6	7
1957-58	..	51	13	3,610	3,049	67	111
1958-59	..	62	14	3,543	3,187	71	118
1959-60	..	54	17	3,699	3,302	74	125
1960-61	..	57	18	4,172	3,482	74	119
1961-62	..	57	19	4,205	3,661	67	109

It is difficult to get the proper type of teachers for such schools and most of the scholars are attracted by the stipends granted. The schools have not made any remarkable contribution to the academic progress of the district. The students generally go to high schools at an advanced age for further education after enjoying the stipends at the basic schools. The financial drain of the State exchequer for continuing this system of education has been very considerable and many eminent educationists and public men have recently expressed their diffidence in the way the system of Basic education is being run. Both the teachers and the trainees have not yet had any distinguishing feature in their own spheres and it is unfortunate that the Basic Education Scheme is most unpopular among the educationist and the employees of the Education Department.

PROFESSIONAL EDUCATION.

Teachers' Training schools form an important wing under professional education. The expansion of the schools of various types needed a very large number of trained teachers and to fill up the want of training schools for the teachers had to be opened up.

In 1950-51 a re-orientation of the system of teachers' education was found necessary and the courses were modified so as to bring them nearer to the basic system of education. The Elementary Training schools were re-named as Junior Basic Training schools.

The training period of the Junior Basic Training schools at Madhepura, Saharsa and Supaul was extended from one to two years. In addition a Senior Basic Training school had been started at Sukhasan Marhora village in Madhepura subdivision. Candidates with the minimum qualification of a pass in the middle standard were admitted in the Junior schools while the Matriculates were admitted in the Senior Basic Training schools. In 1961 the distinction between the Senior and Junior Training schools was removed. All the schools were named as Teachers' Training schools The standard is not high and the type of teachers turned out has been continued to be poor.

The following table supplied by the District Education Office will show the progress of professional schools in the district:—

Years.	No. of schools.		No. of scholars.		No. of teachers.	
	Senior Training school.	Junior Training school.	Senior Training school.	Junior Training school.	Senior Training school.	Junior Training school.
1	2	3	4	5	6	7
1957-58 ..	1	2	94	274	7	8
1958-59 ..	1	2	97	274	8	9
1959-60 ..	1	2	100	289	8	9
1960-61 ..	1	3	153	494	9	19
1961-62 ..	1	3	191	594	10	24

There is a common criticism that the standard of education is falling due to the inadequate equipment of the teachers. There is also a terrible dearth of even half-baked teachers. In our investigation one teacher was found running 4 or 5 classes simultaneously in several rural schools.

TECHNICAL EDUCATION.

The district is very backward so far as institutions for technical education are concerned. There are only two technical schools, viz., an Agricultural school and an Industrial school at Saharsa. A purely agricultural district, Saharsa needs more of technical schools.

Agricultural Training School.

This was established in 1957. It is a State-managed institution which imparts training in Agronomy, Horticulture, Irrigation and Drainage, Plant Protection, Agricultural Engineering, Cottage Industries and Civics. The minimum qualification for admission in the school is Matriculation passed with Mathematics. The total number of trainees in 1961-62 was 105 and four teachers. Up to the session of 1958-59 the course was of one year's duration and after passing from this school the students used to receive six months' higher training in extension work at any of the four Extension Training Centres of Bihar at Patna, Ranchi, Bhagalpur and Muzaffarpur. From 1959 the school has been upgraded and the course of study has been of two years' duration. Some stipends are given. The successful students are awarded Diploma in Agriculture and Animal Husbandry. The men that pass out are usually recruited as Village Level Worker in the Blocks. The school does not maintain any register to show if the trainees have had proper placement.

Industrial School.

It was esablished in 1960 and had 60 students and five teachers in 1961-62. This school imparts training in tailoring, leather work, carpentry, blacksmithy, etc Some stipends are given. Students are mostly drawn to the school because of the stipends. There is no follow-on contact to find out if the trainees have had proper placement.

ORIENTAL SCHOOLS.

Under oriental schools come Sanskrit *tols*, *madarsas* and *maktabs* where teaching in Sanskrit and Urdu is given in subjects like poetry, grammer, language, etc. The students are trained for passing examinations for getting titles. They are usually absorbed as teachers of Sanskrit, Urdu or Persian in schools.

The progress of the Sanskrit *tols* and *madarsas* is shown in the following table.—

Year.	No. of Sanskrit tols.	No. of scholars.	No. of Sanskrit primary schools.	No. of scholars.	No. of Madarsas.	No of scholars.	No. of Maktabs.	No. of scholars.
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
1958-59 ..	6	192	3	248	4	394	97	7,204
1959-60 ..	6	189	3	249	4	391	98	7,243
1960-61 ..	8	206	5	282	5	413	101	7,339
1961-62 ..	8	209	5	302	6	463	109	7,620

The above table shows that the number of Sanskrit *tols* and schools has increased during 1960-61. Oriental schools have received a general encouragement during recent years. Some modern subjects of Arts have been added in the syllabus of the Sanskrit schools and *madarsas* to suit the general educational pattern. Besides, there are four Sanskrit high schools in the district at Bangaon, Mahisi, Nirmali and Singheshwar Asthan established in 1956, 1958, 1950 and 1954 respectively.

PHYSICAL EDUCATION.

Drills and gymnastics are a regular feature in the schools and colleges. Outdoor games as a part of physical education have always been emphasised. Since 1956 under the patronage of State Government thirteen *Vyayamshalas* and *Akharas* at Sahsoul, Bishanpur, Bariahi, Bangaon, Nauhatta (two), Arraha, Baghwa, Kisanpur, Ekhar, Pachgachia, Nonaiti and Hempur have been opened to encourage physical training among the adults as well. A sum of Rs. 2,128 has been given as grant during 1961-62.

Physical training is also imparted in the girls' schools where provisions for games are liberally encouraged. The *A. C. C., N. C. C. and N. C. C. R. units, boy scouts and girl guides have been liberally helped by State Government.

There is a Deputy Superintendent of Physical Education with headquarters at Saharsa to look after the physical education programmes in the educational institutions, *Akharas* and *Vyayamshalas*.

It is a pity that indigenous games and recreations developing the body and the mind simultaneously are dying out. Games like *Kabadi, hadu-du* or mainly recreations like wrestling, etc., are not very popular now. They have been replaced by games like football, hockey, volley-ball, etc. Tennis has become very expensive and is losing ground.

Scouts and Girl Guides.

Till 1942 there were two district associations one under the Scout Association and the other under the Hindustan Scouts, running separately. In 1950 both the associations were amalgamated at higher level and the branches were merged in the district also. After merger the name became the Bharat Scouts and Guides Association. Regular training and the holding of camps are encouraged. The scouts and the guides are particularly trained to serve the country and with this object their services are utilised in Singheswar *mela* and other fairs for social work. In March, 1963 the total number of cadets in the schools in the district were 5,432.

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* A. C. C.—Auxiliary Cadet Corps.

N. C. C.—National Cadet Corps.

N. C. C. R.—National Cadet Corps Rifles.

Auxiliary Cadet Corps (A. C. C.), National Cadet Corps (N. C. C.) and National Cadet Corps Rifles (N. C. C. R.).

The main aim of the National Cadet Corps is to develop ideas of comradeship, service and leadership in young men and women. Another aim is to provide military training to young men and women and build up a reserve of potential defence. Parades and frequent camps are held to help the cadets in force.

The training is imparted to the students under the management of the 9th Bihar Battalion National Cadet Corps with headquarters at Monghyr. The Senior Division N. C. C. is meant for the college students, while the Junior division is meant for the school students. Since 1960 a new unit, viz., N. C. C. R. has been started in Saharsa college. There are N. C. C. and N. C. C. R. units in Saharsa college and N. C. C. R. units in Madhepura college. In March, 1963 the total number of cadets in these colleges were 800 which show that there is still a wide scope for the progress of the movement. The N. C. C. R. units are under the management of 58th Bihar Group N. C. C. R. with headquarters at Saharsa. There are A. C. C. units in a number of schools of the district. From July, 1963 these wings have become compulsory in schools and colleges.

These units deserve expansion. The want of the sense of discipline and responsibility that have vitiated the younger generation and the student community required such units as an antidote.

EDUCATION FOR THE HANDICAPPED, DEAF, DUMB AND BLIND.

There are no such schools in the district.

LIBRARIES.

The number of libraries and the incidence of readership gives a clue to the cultural development of a district. The district is very backward in the incidence of good libraries. The State Government have adopted "Gandhi Pustkalaya" at Saharsa established in 1954 as a district central library. There are about 2,000 books in various languages and a number of periodicals are also subscribed. The library has got 300 members and the daily readership is about 100. Some of the other libraries with much smaller scope are Christian *Sahitya Kendra Pustkalaya* (Saharsa), Muslim Library (Saharsa), Supaul *Pustkalaya* (Supaul), Kosi *Pustkalaya* (Birpur) Cheddi *Pustkalaya* (Bangaon) and Alamnagar *Pustkalaya* (Alamnagar). The readership at these institutions is very small and they are poorly equipped.

The State has now taken up aiding the libraries. There is a number of smaller libraries located throughout the district but none of them is well-equipped. The official figure in 1963 (March) is 163 libraries in the district out of which 78 libraries received grants from the State Government. This estimate does not include the libraries

maintained by some of non-officials in the district. Some of the social clubs like Saharsa Officers Club, Saharsa Life Insurance Corporations' Club, Kosi Club at Birpur also have their own libraries. The schools and colleges have also their own libraries but very few of them are properly equipped. It cannot be said that this district has made any substantial contribution to the library movement. Readership is very limited and the tools for encouraging readership are also meagre.

An investigation was made and it was found that literature of light type like novels, dramas, illustrated magazines, etc., has a larger patronage. Newspapers in English and in vernaculars are in greater demand in the urban areas than in the villages.

There are no Museum, Botanical and Zoological gardens in the district.

JOURNALISM, ETC.

No scientific periodicals or newspapers in any language are published in this district. Two monthly magazines, one in Hindi and the other in Maithili, namely, *Kalakar* and *Avibyanjana* are published from Saharsa town. They are both literary publications and have a very small circulation.

In the district there are some literary and cultural associations viz. Maithili Samiti at Supaul established in 1945, *Sahityakar Sangh* Supaul, established in 1961, Maithili *Sahitya Sansthan*, Saharsa started in 1962, *Navin Kalakar Sangh*, Saharsa established in 1960 and *Sangit Natya Parishad*, Saharsa started in 1963. Besides, there is a music school at village Panchgachhia where training in music is imparted by Shri Raghu Jha a musician of high eminence in Bihar. Excepting the music school the other associations are not well-organised or patronised. There are no scientific societies or museums.

Occasional cultural shows are organised at some places in schools or in public stages. People take keen interest in them on occasions like *Tulsi Jayanti*, *Bhartendu Jayanti* and *Rabindra Jayanti*. *Kavi Sammelans* are organised in educational institutions. There is a Maithil *Sahitya Parishad* at Saharsa which meets occasionally.

This district which had once a high incidence of Sanskrit learning and culture has had a terrible set-back due to the constant floods of the Kosi. When struggle for existence is the main problem naturally culture shall wilt. It is, however, expected that there will be a change now that the economy is likely to be stabilised.

SOCIAL EDUCATION.

As a Welfare State there has been a comprehensive programme to sponsor a chain of social education centres throughout the countryside where the common man along with men of other types could

relax at their leisure hours and spend sometime usefully to them and to the community. Such centres are equipped with various types of audio-visual aids, games, provision for music, books, sewing and knitting apparatus. An attempt is made at these centres to liquidate illiteracy. Various types of performances, cinema shows and popular lectures are organised. Talks on health, education and sanitary measures are given. Women folk are encouraged to learn sewing, knitting and tailoring, etc. Most of these centres are located in the school buildings or in the office of *Gram Panchayats* or co-operative societies. These centres are normally manned in the evening. The State Government in the Education Department spend a large sum on these centres but there is a common criticism that the money is not well utilised.

The literacy movement for removing illiteracy is the main item for these social centres. A large number of teachers are employed and the number of teachers and students attending the social education centres have been on the increase from 1957-58 to 1961-62. In 1957-58 there were 261 centres, 7,403 scholars and 261 teachers. In 1961-62 there were 299 centres, 8,522 scholars and 299 teachers. It is not known if the figures really connote progress that they should indicate.

No appraisal has, however, been made of the efficacy of the organisation or the impact on the common man. It is a common criticism that the financial drain is not fully utilised.

CHAPTER XV.

MEDICAL AND PUBLIC HEALTH.

To understand the Medical and Public Health problems, the picture of the district in 1958 as given by the Civil Surgeon and Senior Medical Officer is summarised. He mentions: "It is necessary to understand the river Kosi, now the river of Sorrow, her vagaries, uncertainties and devastations. It is a river of sands, much less of silt. Its catchment area is vast. On account of the slope of its bed, the currents are not only fast but furious. It has built a land of sands. Therefore the furious currents find it easy to cut the impediments on their way in absolutely no time. The sand contents are so profuse that the river can fill up, as it has actually done, a large-sized deep tank with sand up to the brim in a night's time. Consequent upon the bed getting filled up with sand during one flood, the course is bound to change in the next flood. So the people lived in constant terror, not knowing which course the river would take in the succeeding year. It is said that during the last 100 years, the river which was flowing through the heart of Purnea district, is now, by gradual changes, jumping westwards, flowing on the western border of this district.

During floods the vast tract of this district lay submerged under water. The movements of the population had to be confined to a few dry islands or higher mounds in and around the villages. The expanse of water with furious currents was so exhaustive that a boat, at great risk, crossed from one bank to the other once only in the day each way. These floods in their wake brought about difficulties in getting pure drinking water. This naturally led to insanitary conditions and infections. The still spill-water formed the breeding ground for mosquito. In face of the transport difficulties medical relief till a few years back was not even nominal. It was as difficult for the relief to reach the villages as for the villagers to seek it. The result was that corpses had to be carried by cart loads, and since cremation was impossible due to scarcity of fuel and even burning grounds, were thrown to the currents.

Necessity dictated the food habits of the people. When harvest lay decaying under water, the villagers had to fall back upon animals and fishes as their principal food. The Brahmins of this district take fish as a matter of course and Vaishnav temples are scarcely to be seen. People kept flocks of cattle to get milk, *ghee* and *dahi*. It is not a strange scene here for the rich village man to be even now in possession of 100 cows and buffaloes. Due to the primitive way of breeding and lack of proper pasturage the breed has deteriorated.

The yield of an average buffalo here is about 2 seers per day and that of an average good cow less than that of a she-goat of the western districts of North Bihar.

The months following the recession of floods were as difficult then, as they are even now for transport purposes. There being no water but mud only, neither a boat could ply nor an average bullock-cart.

The following dry months had to witness a peculiar scene due to the river Kosi. The tracks would be studded with hillocks of sands left by the river, and the pedestrian would find it difficult to wade his way. These sands had already buried green lands lost to the world for all times to come or had left a sandy soil which would refuse to grow any plant except jungles of *kans* and *pater*. It was only where the river was good enough to leave some silt that some agriculture was possible.

The excess of manganese in the contents of the river water gave it another damaging property. It is a folk lore that the river water by its contact dries up the jackfruit and mango trees. The scientific explanation is the presence of excess of manganese. Before the Kosi came to this district the area was an orchard.

It can be surmised that the Kosi in particular and the chain of rivers flowing through the adjacent district of Darbhanga in general have brough about changes in the habits and social customs peculiar to this district and the tract. Thus till a few years ago, no body dared to build a *pucca* house. The people preferred to live in hutments. The marriage ceremonies were perhaps reduced to the bare minimum, devoid of pompous processions and shows of music and light. Swimming and boating are common arts practised even by the females.

The people have devised special ways and means of living peculiar to their needs. Thus it will not be a strange scene to find a small toddler playing on the bank of a stream with a thin rope round its waist and ankles anchored to a peg in the ground, while the mother is away doing some domestic work. This precaution reducing the innocent citizen to a medieval prisoner is taken by the busy parents to prevent the child from falling into the river and being swept away by the currents.

Evolution of public and medical health programme in this district.

The main problem of the district in the past as in the present has been the river Kosi with all her vagaries and curses. The floods were then uncontrolled. As it was impossible to know from beforehand, which way the Kosi would flow, living was reduced to a state of undefined terror. People could hardly move out and any relief could hardly reach their homes due to communication difficulties,

which was as difficult during the flood as it was after the recession of floods. The pioneers had to take these difficulties into account to undertake suitable relief measures.

Saharsa district was till 1954 a part of Bhagalpur district. The Medical and Public Health Programme was mostly in the hands of Bhagalpur District Board. They were alive to the situation, the difficulties of communication and the prevailing high mortality. The number of District Board dispensaries were increased and gradually the Anti-Kala-azar Centres added year after year. But it was not till the area was converted into a sub-district and later into a full-fledged district that the present evolution which is still in progress has been possible.

The first massive human effort in the direction of giving medical relief to the people has been the introduction of modified Bhore's Scheme in 1947 followed by the integration of nationalised health services.

Health and Primary Centres.

The main feature of modified Bhore's Scheme was to open a primary centre which would consist of two Medical Officers, one of whom would be static and the other for mobile work. The static work amounted to the same type of work as was being done then or is being done now in any dispensary or hospital. For mobile work three sub-centres were provided to each main centre at a distance of about 5 miles from the main centre. The mobile doctor was required to attend to each sub-centre twice in the week. To overcome his communication difficulties, he was provided with a boat for his transport during flood season and with a bullock-cart for transport during dry season. These vehicles were also intended to serve the purpose of ambulance when and where necessary for transport of deserving patients to the main static centre, which was provided with six bedded-dieted indoor ward. For work on days, other than on the visiting days of the mobile Medical Officer, each sub-centre was staffed with one dresser, and a trained *dai*. For overall supervision of these sub-centres and to carry out the functions connected therewith one Sanitary Inspector and one Midwife were provided for each unit.

Necessary ancillary staff including one Compounder was provided. Roughly speaking the expenditure on the medicine and surgical goods has been 6 annas per indoor patient and 2 annas per outdoor patient per day and 14 annas per indoor patient per day for diet.

Naturally the sites for these centres were selected in the worst Kosi-affected areas, as they stood then in the district. In the interest of efficiency of work, the posts of the Medical Officers were made non-practising with a compensatory allowance. Both Medical and Public Health works were combined in each unit. To make the entire

scheme successful, the central organisation at the district level was also overhauled. To begin with, when this district existed as a sub-district of Bhagalpur district the medical head was the Additional Civil Surgeon. He, however, functioned independent of the Civil Surgeon of Bhagalpur and combined in himself both the Medical and Public Health works. He was therefore designated as Senior Executive Medical Officer (S. E. M. O.). Private practice was not allowed for which he was given a compensatory allowance. Later on when the sub-district developed into a full-fledged district, the post of the Additional Civil Surgeon was also converted into Civil Surgeon, who also became S. E. M. O. as before.

To make the work more successful a mobile State Dispensary was started with its office at the district headquarters. It was staffed with one Medical Officer, one Sanitary Inspector, one Compounder, one Dresser, one Driver besides other menials and equipped with a power wagon, a motor boat and a tractor. The main purpose of this dispensary was, as it is even now, to rush relief to any part of the district according to the necessity.

An important feature for the success of this scheme was transport of deserving patients from the periphery to a proper treatment centre. In the centres, this facility was provided as indicated above. But that was not by itself all sufficient. So steps were taken to provincialise and improve subdivisional hospitals and create a Sadar Hospital at district headquarters where such patients could be transported from the main centres, as these hospitals provided better facility for treatment, etc. Necessarily, therefore, these hospitals were also expanded and brought more up-to-date. In this connection there was a proposal to arrange the transport of such deserving patients to Patna or Darbhanga by air, if necessary. This proposal is yet to materialise. At present the only routes open for such transport to Patna or Darbhanga are the railways.

Full details about these centres are given in the table below:—

Name.	Main centre.	Sub-centres.
1. Nauhatta Primary Centre ..	.. Nauhatta ..	(I) Bhelahi. (II) Barahi. (III) Chatwan.
2. Manguar Primary Centre ..	.. Manguar ..	(I) Biratnagar. (II) Basanahi. (III) Patharghat.
3. Alamnagar Primary Centre ..	.. Alamnagar ..	(I) Phullot. (II) Basbitti. (III) Gangepur.
4. Mahesi Health Centre ..	.. Mahesi ..	(I) Maina. (II) Radhanagar. (III) Sattarwar.
5. Kundah Health Centre ..	.. Kundah .	(I) Mahisarho. (II) Birgaon. (III) Narainpur.

Name.	Main centre.	Sub-centres.
6. Manoharpatti Health Centre ..	Manoharpatti	(I) Jogia. (II) Khukhraha. (III) Simarah.
7. Marauna Health Centre	Marauna ..	(I) Janardanpur. (II) Kamrail. (III) Ganorah.
8. Kumarkhand Health Centre ..	Kumarkhand	(I) Israin. (II) Ranipatti. (III) Bhatni.
9. Kumarganj Health Centre ..	Kumarganj ..	(I) Rattauli. (II) Sisauna. (III) Singion.
10. Thoombha Health Centre	Thoombha ..	(I) Maheshpur. (II) Babhani. (III) Lutapatti.

They were primarily situated in the Kosi-affected areas but with the changing conditions of the Kosi due to the embankments of the Kosi Project, four of them now fall outside the Kosi-affected areas, as it stands at present, three by the side of the eastern embankment and three within the two embankments.

Naturally when they were started it was inevitable that they should be accommodated in hutments in view of the uncertainty and vagaries of the Kosi. In places which now fall outside the Kosi-affected areas, *pucca* structures came up out of public donations and development grants by the Government.

Each centre has its own land. Lands of some of the sub-centres were gifts.

A visit to any of these centres will reveal the unenviable conditions under which the young Medical Officers are living, cut off from society, to which they had been accustomed during their educational career and their families. Any record of the medical history of this district will be incomplete without a word of praise to these doctors who went to Saharsa district and served with their blood and sweat.

Provincialisation of Hospitals and Dispensaries.

In the integration of the nationalised medical scheme following upon introduction of the modified Bhore Scheme, the dispensaries of the District Board were gradually provincialised beginning with 1950. The Kala-azar centres which had sprung up in 1950 were abolished in 1956. At present except three District Board dispensaries and seven Anti-Malaria centres, the rest are State dispensaries, two with indoor beds. Thus there are altogether five Allopathic hospitals and 19 dispensaries in the district under the State besides

Health and Primary centres mentioned above. Their important features are referred to below:—

(1) *Sadar Hospital*.—This hospital was started in the year 1945, in a hired building in the *bazar* with a few indoor beds. One Medical Officer of the cadre of Sub-Assistant Surgeon was posted. It was controlled by the Civil Surgeon of Bhagalpur. It was transformed later on in 1947 into a Civil Hospital with 30 beds under an Additional Civil Surgeon posted here. With the conversion of this sub-district into a full-fledged district, since 1954, this Civil Hospital also began functioning as a Sadar District Hospital and the Additional Civil Surgeon was designated as Civil Surgeon with the power of Senior Executive Medical Officer also.

A temporary *tatti* building was constructed at the proposed site for the new building. The old hospital functioning in the hired building in the *bazar* was shifted to the new temporary building in 1951. In June, 1954 the new building was constructed.

At present it has accommodation of 91 beds and 10 T. B. beds. Subsequently many improvements have been made. An X'ray apparatus is going to be installed.

The T. B. Ward and the T. B. Clinic are under construction. A Maternity and Child Welfare Centre is functioning. A district Public Health Laboratory has been opened. A Family Planning Centre is also running.

The hospital is electrified. Water-supply is obtained from deep tube-wells. Sanitary latrines and urinals have been provided.

The plan is to give specialised treatment at the district level. Beginning has already been made by posting specialists. At present the hospital has two male doctors and one lady doctor. The Civil Surgeon is in overall charge as the Superintendent.

There is provision for three grade 'A' Nurses and two grade 'B' Nurses.

(2) *Supaul and Madhepura Subdivisional Hospitals*.—They were financed first by District Board. They were provincialised in January, 1950.

At present each has 30 beds with a Civil Assistant Surgeon (designated as Deputy Superintendent) incharge, a Second Medical Officer and a Lady Civil Assistant Surgeon.

Each of these hospitals will get a 10-bedded T. B. Ward. An outdoor leprosy shed is attached to Supaul subdivisional Hospital. The buildings at Madhepura are new. The water-supply at Madhepura is from deep tube-well.

(3) *Simrahi Bazar and Police Hospitals*.—Simrahi Bazar Hospital is still functioning in *tatti* shed with ten beds. The Police Hospital is accommodated in a barrack. Steps are afoot for construction of their permanent structures.

(4) *Provincialised State Dispensaries.*—Except for Kunauli, which has four indoor beds and Bangaon which has six indoor beds and Murliganj and Panchgachia which have indoor buildings with no dieted patients, the other dispensaries are without indoor provision. The Bhimnagar and Kanauli State Dispensaries continue to function in *tatti* sheds. A few have better structures. The rest have got permanent structures taken over from the District Board during provincialisation. Each dispensary has a provision of one Medical Officer, one compounder, one dresser, one trained *dai* besides menials.

The hospitals are at Sadar, Supaul, Madhepura, Police Line, Saharsa and Simrahi Bazar.

The State dispensaries besides the mobile at Sadar are at Bangaon, Lagma, Saur, Sahsoul, Panchgachia, Singheshwar, Murliganj, Kishanganj, Chousa, Pipra, Ganpatganj, Pratapganj, Bhimnagar, Chatapur, Tribeniganj, Koriapatty, Nirmali and Kunauli.

Medical Relief by District Board, Saharsa.

With the separation of this district and its growing into a full-fledged district, the District Board with its headquarters at Saharsa was formed in the year 1948.

At present the Board is rendering relief through its three dispensaries which are situated at Sonbarsa, Barail and Baluabazar and its seven Anti-Malaria centres at Karjain, Telwa, Chandrain, Bharauli, Hatwaria, Khakai and Goalpara.

The Board is rendering relief also through fifteen subsidised Ayurvedic dispensaries (at Bhaptiahi, Dhabouli, Jiwachpur, Saharsa, Ratwara, Gorpar, Kashnagar, Gurki Hat, Chatania, Sourazan, Bhatania, Giridharpatti, Pokhrama, Nayanagar and Nirmali), four Unani dispensaries (at Jaduapatti, Madhepura, Madheli and Bagheli), and six Homoeopathic dispensaries (at Puraini, Bhagawanpur, Amha, Murho, Basuli, Bhatranda).

Indigenous method for cure is still followed in the rural areas. Treatment by Homoeopathy, Kaviraji and Unani is prevalent. Most of the unqualified Homoeopaths and other quacks are also practising in the interior. Sometimes they do much harm due to their ignorance. Mostly they use allopathic medicines and injections about the use and toxicity of which they know practically nothing.

Public Health and Rural Sanitation Scheme.

The Sanitation and Public Health throughout the district is looked after by the District Board for the rural areas excluding Notified Area in the Saharsa Town. At present there is no District Medical Officer of Health. The Civil Surgeon is also the District Medical Officer of Health of the district. He carries out both the functions under the designation of the Civil Surgeon and Senior Executive Medical Officer.

In this scheme, a part of the cost of which is borne by the Government, the District Board has at present three Assistant Health Officers, one for each subdivision; seven Sanitary Inspectors, one for each two to three *thanas;* one Health Inspector for each *thana* and one Vaccinator for each thirty thousand population and two Disinfectors for each *thana*. The Senior Executive Medical Officer forms the head of this scheme, which functions in co-operation and co-ordination with the District Board.

The sanitary conditions of the villages still remain poor due to lack of knowledge of environmental hygiene in the population. The villages are built in a very congested manner with lack of ventilation arrangements. In every village ditches, bushes and scattered heaps of cow-dung are common sight leading to flies and mosquito nuisance. The roads are very dusty. During the rainy season the villages become much more filthy as there is no drainage system.

Arrangements for latrines do not as a rule exist in the rural areas. Villagers resort to promiscuous defecation, generally by the side of roads, ponds and the rivers. This habit forms a great factor in the spread of hookworm and other bowel diseases. Jute is allowed to rot in the water making the atmosphere very unhygienic and rendering the water very harmful for drinking purposes.

But with the opening of N. E. S. Blocks, establishment of model villages and extensive educative propaganda, a change for the better is noticeable.

As a matter of fact health education forms an important part of this programme. The State has a Health Educator and a Sanitary Inspector. The District Board runs a propaganda section with cinema shows, exhibitions and models. The National Extension Service and Community Development Blocks take active part in the education from time to time.

A resume of anti epidemic measures taken during the years 1948 to 1957 will be found yearwise in the following table:—

Year.	Anti-Cholera inoculation.	Wells disinfection.	Primary vaccination.	Secondary vaccination.
1948	3,56,503	88.074	34.710	74.940
1949 . .	1,32 087	19 402	36,280	11.659
1950	3,16.726	76,717	39.832	19.848
1951	2,23,548	1.61,114	56.106	2,75,071
1952	1,86,824	1.24,162	46.648	2,65.954
1953	7.83,614	2.39,149	34.080	1,13.441
1954	5,85,502	1,99,580	39,628	3,37.454
1955	6,81,064	1,98,337	46,163	10,62.155
1956	6,29.828	2,08.950	33,605	6,63.599
1957	7.26,337	1,74,800	42.356	5,31,087

In urban areas Public Health and Sanitation is looked after by a Notified Area Committee at Saharsa and Murliganj, a Union Committee at Madhepura and Nirmali and a Union Board at Supaul.*

During the flood season special measures are taken both for cure and prevention. Now that the Kosi has been embanked on both sides, this work has become more defined but is still as strenuous as before.

A particular feature is the distribution of one village type medicine box to a group of five villages with few exceptions. These boxes contain all important medicines for first aid in the event of outbreak of any epidemic. These medicines can be easily and safely administered by the villager. To guide him printed directions are enclosed in each box. Recently a proposal has been made to provide each village with one such box.

For safe water-supply, the Public Health Engineering Department sinks temporary tube-wells according to necessity to add to the numerous existing permanent ones.

For relief, a floating dispensary is run to work in the flooded areas. Extra boats are provided to permanent treatment centres. Extra temporary treatment centres are opened at strategic points according to necessity.

According to treaty conditions, the Indian Territory has also to undertake preventive measures in the adjoining Nepal *Tarai*.

NATIONAL ANTI-MALARIA PROGRAMME.

It was only right that this programme should have been introduced in a malaria-ridden district like Saharsa. The nucleus was started in the year 1953. At present there is one unit with its headquarters at Bariahi, Saharsa. It has four sub-units, at Supaul, at Madhepura, at Bihariganj and at Saharsa. The *thanas* of Pratapganj, Bhimnagar and Chattapur and the northern portion of Murliganj police-station fall outside the operation of this unit because of population basis. These areas are looked after by the unit at Araria in Purnea district. But the Senior Executive Medical Officer, Saharsa has supervisory control over them. Under this scheme, Anti-Mosquito Drive, particularly against the malaria-carrying species of this place is undertaken by spraying animal and human dwelling houses with 5 per cent (100 to 200 mg.) aqueous solution of D. D. T. during the transmission period twice from May to September.

* The Union Committee and the Union Board are now substituted by Notified Area Committees.

Extensive malaria surveys were carried out in 1954 and 1957. The statistics show a fall in spleen rate from 45 per cent to 1 per cent in endemic areas and from 80 per cent to 2 per cent in hyperendemic areas, during the period 1953 to 1957.

From April 1, 1958 the National Malaria Eradication Programme has been started in the whole of the district. Under this programme extensive measures are taken. The aim was to eradicate malaria completely by 1961. Malaria has definitely gone down although not eradicated. The work has not yet been wound up.

Kosi Project.

In spite of all these schemes, there was no guarantee of safety either to property or health due to the vagaries of the turbulent Kosi. In 1954 there was a very high flood and acute distress. To fight this menace the Kosi Project was planned in this very year. The first step was to embank the river on its two sides. On this preliminary step, other steps have followed and will follow. Naturally, therefore, the project has a colossal shape. The project has its own medical arrangement. The scheme was to have static treatment centres at Birpur, Supaul, Nirmali in this district and Ghoghardiha in Darbhanga district. Each centre has a number of sub-centres, each staffed by either a Compounder or a Dresser. Each centre has also a Sanitary Inspector and according to availability, two doctors, one for static work and the other for mobile work. The expansion of the scheme on the above lines, followed the lay out of the work of the project. They were not confined to this district only but also to the neighbouring sister district of Darbhanga and in the friendly State of Nepal. It is surmised that this scheme will continue till the life of the project and later on may have to be given a different shape according to the changed condition prevailing then.

Besides treatment and prevention in other spheres, the medical section of the project has also an Anti-Malaria Unit of its own, with its headquarters at Birpur.

Development Plan.

Under the Development Plan in the country as a whole and in this State in particular, National Extension Service Blocks were formed, starting with the year 1954. The first Block was started in Bangaon, now shifted to Saharsa (Kahara). At present there are 21 Blocks, the details of which have been given in the text on Economic Trends and Miscellaneous Occupations.

Each Block will have a health centre with a static unit and a mobile unit. The mobile unit will have three sub-centres each with a health worker and a trained *dai*. Each Block will have two doctors, one for static and the other for mobile work and one Sanitary Inspector. Thus in principle the shape of each health centre

is the same as the one provided in modified Bhore Scheme already in operation in this district since 1947. But for the paucity of doctors and other personnel each of the sub-centres and Blocks may not have got the requisite staff.

For public health work, the unit worker is the Village Level Worker and the *Gram Sevak* of the Block. Each of them is in charge of one *Halka* of the Block. They are trained in work of vaccination, inoculation, and disinfection.

As in the field of Public Health Work several agencies are operating, namely, the District Board staff, the staff of hospital and dispensaries and the Block staff, it is absolutely necessary that they should work in absolute co-operation and co-ordination.

MATERNITY AND CHILD WELFARE PROGRAMME.

At present there are three urban Maternity and Child Welfare centres—one at Supaul, one at Madhepura and one at Saharsa, and four rural ones—one at Mahesi, one at Alamnagar, one at Kumarganj and one at Bangaon. The rural institutions are attached to local medical institutions and the urban ones to local hospitals. Each centre has an Auxiliary Nurse—Midwife, in the unavoidable absence of a Lady Health Visitor, with one or more trained *dais* and menial staff.

These centres have an educative role, which is being rendered by home visits, *mahalla* lectures, individual contacts, exhibitions and cinema shows; these centres have also to do domicilliary midwifery service in normal labour cases with suitable sanitary surroundings, and also the distribution of milk and other invalid food at the main centres.

In this district there is a provision for one trained *dai* at each State dispensary, three to four at each Health and Primary centre and three at each Block Health centre. These trained *dais* have to undergo a training of six months at the subdivisional or sadar hospital. It cannot be said that they are sufficient in quality for the actual requirements. But there is no alternative as good candidates are scarcely available for obvious social reasons. Each Health and Primary centre has a provision for one midwife. There is great dearth for midwives also. The village *chamain* still dominates the stage due to superstitious beliefs of the country and respect for age old convention and gross illiteracy. To bring about an improvement in the quality of their work, a scheme of one month's training of these quacks is in force, but is scarcely availed of in the absence of any binding legislation.

The infant mortality rate has been assessed in the following table:—

Year.	Total births.	Total deaths below one year.
1949	23,441	..
1950	15,762	..
1951	16,845	533
1952	18,353	305
1953	21,569	319
1954	19,851	583
1955	20,279	518
1956	12,568	36
1957	13,761	227
1958	Figures were not available.	
1959		
1960		
1961		

FAMILY PLANNING PROGRAMME.

The conception of Family Planning is of recent origin in the face of growing population of the country. It is an economic programme. Sponsored by the Central Government and taken up by the States family planning centres are springing up. One centre exists at Saharsa attached to Sadar Hospital under a grade 'B' Nurse who functions as the Lady Health Visitor. Besides clinics held with her under Lady Doctor, she has to pay home visits. The response is meagre and confined to a small section of the middle class only. The idea scarcely catches imagination with the male partners. Much more strenuous efforts are needed for adequate success. A rural centre of this type has been recommended for being set up. The Maternity and Child Welfare centres are also urged to propagate the idea of this planning. Very little work has yet been done.

Samaj Kalyan Bistar Parijojana.

For the uplift of rural welfare of the females and children, including maternity and child welfare, a district unit of *Samaj Kalyan Bistar Parijojana* is functioning in this district, with its headquarters at Kariho near Supaul, under the auspices of a Central Advisory Board at New Delhi with State branch at Patna. The unit is rendering service with a *Mukhya Gram Sevika,* one *Gram Sevika,* one craft female teacher, one trained *dai* and a mechanised

vehicle. At present this unit has got sub-centres at Lokha, Ratauli, Ghoghra and Ramnagar. Each of these sub-units has one *Gram Sevika*, one craft teacher and one trained *dai*. The aim is that each sub-centre will cater for 25 villages equivalent to 25,000 population. The lands have in most of the places been acquired by public donation. For the construction of the building the public have to contribute 12½ per cent.

It is a private body having fullest co-operation of the official agency. In due course more units are likely to spring up in this district under this project.

Mission Hospitals.

Particular mention has to be made of the Christian Mission hospitals at Saharsa, Madhepura, Barjora, Tribeniganj, Latauna and Murliganj. These institutions are working very efficiently. Some of them have been working for decades.

Anti-Tuberculosis Programme.

While it can be asserted that menaces like cholera, malaria, kala-azar and small-pox have been controlled, efforts are now being made for the control of tuberculosis. Each subdivision is expected to get a 10-bedded T. B. ward and a central clinic at the district headquarters.

Anti-Leprosy Programme.

For the control of leprosy, a survey work is absolutely essential to form the basis of any planning. The survey work has been started. A district Anti-Leprosy Association has been formed. At present the treatment is confined to outdoor work only.

District Laboratory.

A District Laboratory has been opened at the district headquarters where chemical analysis will be done to check adulteration. The Food Adulteration Act is in force.

Principal Diseases.

A few years back malaria, kala-azar, cholera, small-pox, fevers and hookworm were very prevalent in the district. The mortality and morbidity rate was very high. With the opening of a network of hospitals and centres, the diseases have been brought under control. This will be evident from the tables given below:—

(*a*) Cholera—

Year.	Attach.	Death.
1948	2,400	1,120
1949	229	71
1950	8,572	1,[illegible]

Year.				Attack.	Death.
1951	..	..	..	51	11
1952	..	..	..	15	6
1953	..	..	..	329	173
1954	..	..	..	295	115
1955	..	..	..	17	5
1956	..	..	..	7	4
1957	..	..	..	52	13
1958	..	..	..	Figures were not available.	
1959	..	..	..		
1960	..	.	..		
1961	..	..	..		

(*b*) Small-pox—

Year.				Attack.	Death.
1948	..	..	..	96	4
1949	..	..	.	168	12
1950	..	..	..	281	142
1951	..	..	..	1,027	117
1952	..	..	..	389	46
1953	..	..	..	44	5
1954	..	..	..	30	6
1955	..	..	..	174	22
1956	..	..	..	Nil	Nil.
1957	..	..	..	Figures were not available.	
1958	..	..	..		
1959	..	..	..		
1960	..	..	..		
1961	..	..	..		

(*c*) Other Diseases—

Year.	Kala-azar.	Malaria.	Hookworm.	Pulmonary Tuberculosis.	Leprosy.
1	2	3	4	5	6
1948	4,698	50,561	3,143	658	133
1949	21,501	69,566	4,184	1,014	133
1950 . ..	4,855	59,578	3,271	479	101
1951	11,202	67,983	11,019	2,666	413
1952	9,167	64,907	12,308	4,138	342
1953	6,206	51,045	11,709	2,254	446
1954	4,471	42,479	13,242	1,592	461
1955	2,620	29,781	13,180	1,962	631
1956	1,796	21,847	16,496	2,397	1,502
1957	Figures were not available.				
1958					
1959					
1960					
1961					

VITAL STATISTICS.

From the figures given below, it will be seen that there is an excess of birth over death. The reporting agency here as elsewhere is the *thana chowkidar*. It can emphatically be said that the accuracy of these reports is doubtful. This work is now being gradually entrusted to the N. E. S. Blocks or the *Gram Panchayat* where no block exists.

Year.	Birth.	Death.
1949	23,441	8,751
1950	15,762	9,701
1951	16,845	7,707
1952	18,353	7,427
1953	21,567	6,479
1954	19,851	7,345
1955	20,279	6,975
1956	12,568	4,092
1957	13,761	5,445
1958	Figures were not available.	
1959		
1960		
1961		

SNAKES.

The commonest variety is the common Cobra. A special specie is seen during floods wading through water. It is ferocious and very aggresive. Other varieties met are the *Karait* and the Russel's Viper.

Deaths from snake bites resulting from poisoning are common. But authentic records are not available.

DIET.

The common diet of the general mass is rice, wheat, maize, gram, *marua,* sweet potato, *khesari* and *kulthi.* The diet varies according to the social status and economic conditions.

Most of the people take only carbohydrate diet, seldom animal protein or fat except those near the Kosi river or its branches, where they get fish, milk, and eggs. Meat and fish are available but they are consumed by the more well-to-do class of people. Pure *ghee* is available in the interior and for the well-to-do class of people. Much of hydrogenated oil is used now. Green vegetables are available in plenty in rural areas, except during the flood season.

In between the Kosi embankments and also in some adjacent villages outside, most of the people live on Government relief for whole of the flood season.

Mass propaganda by the Health Department is in progress about the balanced diet and the nutritional aspect of different food.

WATER SUPPLY.

The water-supply is from wells and tube-wells. In flood-affected areas the river also forms a source of supply. Tanks are scarce and

those that exist are not used for drinking water purposes. The sub-soil water follows the course of the slope of the land from north to south. This stratum can be tapped at depths varying from 15 to 30 feet. Water at this stratum even at places is not drinkable.

Besides the Public Health Engineering Department, the N. E. S. and C. D. Blocks have also to attend to the needs of water-supply to the population. They are doing it under the Development Schemes by sinking permanent wells and installing tube-wells according to the advice of the S. E. M. O.

FAIRS AND FESTIVALS.

Hats, fairs and festivals are problems for the medical staff.

On specified days in the week, *hats* are held at numerous places, where as a routine livestock are sold and purchased besides other commodities.

At Supaul a *mela* is held every year to commemorate the Indian Republic Day. It was started in year 1951.

The biggest fair of the district is held at Singheshwar Asthan, six miles away from Madhepura on the occasion of every *Shivratri*. The temple of Lord Shiva there is very old and attracts thousands of visitors every year.

At Maheshi a *mela* is held during every Durga Puja in reverence to the deity of Devi Ugra Tara. It is said to be the oldest temple, older than that of Singheshwar Asthan.

A *mela* is held at Arar Ghat on every Purnamasi (fullmoon day) of 'Push' to worship the river Kosi.

In Ramnavmi, a fair is held at Tribeniganj.

Besides these, a number of smaller fairs are held at numerous other places in the district.

The fairs of Supaul and Singheshwar are controlled by a committee consisting of official and non-official members. The public health and sanitation is looked after by the official agency assisted by the above committee working in co-operation.

The other smaller fairs were started by the then *zamindars*. With the vesting of *zamindari* in the State, the arrangements of these *melas* have passed into the hands of the Revenue Department.

The important festivals are observed in the district in the same fashion as in other sister districts. Special assemblies commonly known as *'Sabha'* are held every year preceding the auspicious marriage season. It is held at village Bangaon which is situated at a distance of 8 miles from Saharsa. The congregation of Maithil Brahmins here runs to about 10 to 15 thousands. The purpose of the festival is to finalise negotiations after selection of bridegrooms and construct healthier social ties. The medical staff have to take

various measures to keep the sites clean and see that no epidemics break out.

Indian Medical Association.

The Bihar State Branch of the Indian Medical Association started its branch at Saharsa in the year 1954. Subsequently other branches were opened at Supaul, Madhepura and Simrahi Bazar. The membership is open to only registered allopathic practitioners.

Special Problems.

From the above survey, it will be apparent even to the casual reader, the colossal work that was undertaken a decade back. It will be wrong to assume that the work had been finished. It may be said that only one corner has been turned.

It will be a misconception to assume that medical problems are confined to their own watertight compartment. These problems are inter-connected with those of communication, agriculture, veterinary, education, etc. The whole network of medical organisation is bound to meet a sad fate if proper communication be not available, and if people do not know or learn how to make the best use of these facilities. The nutrition level cannot improve unless the people take a balanced common diet.

The communication difficulties can be imagined when it is stated that the district possessed up till 1958 only about 75 miles of coaltarred metalled road.

The railway communications are in no way very quick or adequate. Postal, Telegraph and Telephone communications are still inadequate.

But the problem of all problems of this district is the Kosi which is now being chained and controlled. With the conquest of Kosi, the river of sorrow the face of the district in all aspects will change.

CHAPTER XVI.

SOCIAL SERVICES AND PUBLIC LIFE.

Labour Welfare.

The labourers of the district may broadly be divided into three categories, namely, agricultural, industrial and commercial. The majority is of the agricultural labourers. There is a great mobility among the agricultural labourers. Thus an agricultural labourer may become a cartman or he may sell his labour to a rice-mill.

Agricultural labourer.—Agricultural labourers are usually drawn from the family of the agriculturists and other landless labourers. They are mibile and have no obligation to work for a particular wage unless they are of the category of tied labourers because of some land gifts or cash advances. Females and children also help in agricultural operations. Their wages are usually paid in cash. Their working hours are not fixed and their employment also is not assured. They are usually employed for particular agricultural operations and on the average they get employment only for six to eight months in the year. The wages are much less than that of the wages earned by the industrial labour. Their economic condition and standard of life are poor unless they have some lands of their own. Of late, however, the agricultural labourers have started occasionally dictating their terms if the supply of labour is short.

In Bihar, in August, 1951 the wages of field workers were between Rs. 1-2-6 and Rs. 1-10-0 in case of men and between Re. 0-12-0 and Rs. 1-8-4 in case of women.* This rate has somewhat gone up now and at harvesting time the wages depend on the supply of labour.

The Minimum Wages Act of 1948.

The aim of the Act is to fix minimum wages in certain employments wherein sweated labour is most prevalent or where there is big chance of the exploitation of labour. Part II to Schedule of the Act covers agricultural workers and it was enforced in Saharsa district in 1958. The Labour Officer posted at Saharsa has been appointed Inspector under this Act for the proper implementation of the Act in the agriculture sector. There are also five Labour Inspectors for helping the Labour Officer. The Government of Bihar in its notification published in the Gazette of 7th July 1958 have fixed the

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* R. C. Saxena: *Labour Problems and Social Welfare* (Sixth Edition), page [illegible].

following minimum rates of wages for agricultural labourers engaged in different agricultural operations for Saharsa district:—

Name of the agricultural operations.	Minimum rates of wages.
(1) Double ploughing per 5 *kathas* (locally known as sanwar).	2 seers 12 chattaks of paddy including perquisites.
(2) Harrowing	2 seers 12 chattaks of paddy including perquisites per day.
(3) Transplanting (including up-rooting) 2 *kathas* in *Asarh* and *Savan*, 1 *katha* in second part of *Bhado* and first part of *Aswin*.	3 seers 4 chattaks of paddy with breakfast and mid-day meal.
(4) Harvesting per 10 bundles	One bundle.
(5) All other operations such as embanking, manuring, weeding, sowing, threshing, winnowing, irrigating, etc.	3 seers 4 chattaks of paddy with mid-day meal per day.

During the years 1961 and 1962, 147 and 236 complaints respectively were filed and disposed of by the Labour Officer.

The agricultural labourers are not organised and do not even know the provisions of law. They cannot hold out nor can they normally afford to complain. The Act has not been any boon to the agricultural labourers and it has been difficult to implement most of the provisions of the Act.

The industries of the district have been described elsewhere. The average wages of a mill worker are from Rs. 1-12-0 to Rs. 3 per day. They are mostly seasonal labourers and their services are discontinued but the services of some of these workers are retained by paying them varying amount of retaining allowance in different mills during the off-season.

The commercial labourers are engaged in commercial sector such as grain *gola, pan, biri,* cloth shops, hotels, tea and sweetmeat and other shops that sell consumers' goods, etc. According to the Bihar Shops and Establishment Act, 1953, the shops have to be registered. The commercial sector labourers are mostly located at Saharsa Sadar, Supaul, Murliganj, Nirmali, Bihariganj, Madhepura and Birpur and their number is roughly calculated to be 1,600 only. The Bihar Shops and Establishment Act has been enforced in Saharsa, Supaul and Murliganj and the workers have a weekly holiday and they work for a fixed period of time. Till the end of

December, 1962, 1,089 shops and establishments were registered under the Bihar Shops and Establishment Act in Saharsa, Supaul and Murliganj. 55 complaints were received in 1962-63 against the employers for illegal deduction of wages and illegal discharge from service. Most of the cases were compromised. Secondly three prosecution cases have been filed by the Government (Labour Department) against those employers who did not close their shops on weekly closure days. Two prosecution cases have been filed under the Weekly Holidays Act against the employers.

Under the Shops and Establishment Act, 1953, the employers are required to maintain registers prescribed under the Act and submit annual reports and returns in respect of wages, employment and other matters to the Chief Inspecting Officer, Bihar. The Act provides for working hours, weekly rest, annual leave with wages, protection of employees against illegal fines and deduction, discharge and dismissal, etc.

TRADE UNIONS.

There is no strong Trade Union in the district except two at Bhimnagar, viz., Kosi Project Workers' Association, Bhimnagar and *Rastriya Nav Nirman Mazdoor Sabha*, Bhimnagar. These associations were registered on 13th September 1959 and 20th October 1960 respectively and are affiliated to the *Hind Mazdoor Sangh* and the Indian National Trade Union Congress. There are some unregistered trade unions, viz., *Chhapakhana Mazdoor Panchait*, Saharsa. *Rickshaw Mazdoor* Union, Saharsa, *Safai Mazdoor* Union, Saharsa and Supaul, *Bidi Mazdoor* Union, Saharsa, *Dukan Karamchari Sangh*, Bihariganj and Bariahi, *Rickshaw, Tamtam Mazdoor* Union, Bariahi. These associations have not yet got any foothold and are of very recent origin.

PROHIBITION.

Prohibition as a State policy has not yet been enforced in Saharsa district. The present policy of the State Government is to control the consumption of intoxicants by raising their prices and imposing restrictions regarding places of consumption. etc. There has been a gradual increase in the prices of most of the intoxicants.

The prices of the country liquor in 1954 and thereafter are as follows:—

——		Price (per gallon) from 1st April 1954.	Present rate from 1st December 1962.
		Rs.	Rs.
50 U. P. (Upper proof)	..	11.00	13.00
72.5 U. P. (Upper proof)	..	6.50	7.68

The raising of the price, however, does not appear to have any effect. The statement below supplied by the State Excise Office, Saharsa, shows the increase in revenue and consumption of distillery liquor in the district in spite of the rise of the prices:—

	1960-61.	1961-62.
Revenue from distillery liquor in rupees.	2,27,102	2,78,453
Consumption of distillery liquor per gallon.	10,484.06	12,583.04

Ganja.

The price of *ganja* has been increased from one rupee and four annas to one rupee and sixty P. per *tola* with effect from 1st April 1960. There has been no rise in the price of *bhang* and opium since 1952. The price of *bhang* and opium per *tola* is 3 annas and Rs. 8 respectively.

The statement given below supplied by the State Excise Office, Saharsa, indicates the consumption of *ganja, bhang* and opium in the district of Saharsa:—

Year.		*Ganja.*		*Bhang.*		Opium.	
		Mds.	seers.	Mds.	seers.	Mds.	seers.
1		2	3	4	5	6	7
1959-60	..	19	14	11	00	2	20
1960-61	..	17	38	10	00	3	00
1961-62	..	13	21	10	11	3	8

The above statement indicates a decrease in the consumption of *ganja*. In case of *bhang* it appears that it is almost constant.

As regards opium, restriction has been imposed upon its consumption. The Bihar and Orissa Opium Smoking Act, 1928, which came into force with effect from 1st January 1929 requires that only those persons who are twenty-five or above and are habitual opium-smokers have to get their names registered in the prescribed manner under the Act for getting a fixed quantity of opium. Since 1st April 1959 opium can be only procured under medical certificate and for health purposes.

In this district two voluntary social service organisations, namely, *Harijan Sewak Sangh* and *Bharat Sewak Samaj* are interested in stopping consumption of intoxicants.

HARIJAN WELFARE.

The population of the Scheduled Castes, Scheduled Tribes and other Backward Classes in the district of Saharsa based on the reports of 1951 census (pages 65-66 of the *District Census Handbook*,

Saharsa, published in 1956) and *Census of India,* 1961, Vol. IV, Pt. IIA are as follows:—

	Population.	
	1951.	1961.
Scheduled Castes	2,04,802	2,90,130
Scheduled Tribes	28,306	7,605*
Other Backward Classes ..	2,85,064	Not available.

They are distributed all over the district. The distribution revenue thanawise according to the *Census Report of* 1951 was as follows:—

	Scheduled Castes.	Scheduled Tribes.	Other Backward Classes.
(1) Supaul, Nirmali and Tribeniganj police-stations.	38,296	8,899	48,104
(2) Pratapganj revenue thana and Kishanganj police-stations.	26,842	9,647	52,753
(3) Bangaon revenue thana ..	15.909	598	27,072
(4) Madhepura, Singheshwar and Sourbazar police-stations.	46,204	2,752	39,584
(5) Murliganj police-station ..	23,306	4,496	25,782
(6) Kishanganj revenue thana ..	54,185	1,974	92,369

The total number of persons belonging to the Scheduled Castes, Scheduled Tribes and Backward Classes taken together comes to 5,18,832 as against the total population of 13,08,198 persons according to 1951 census and thus they form about 40 per cent of the whole population of the district. The number of persons belonging to the Scheduled Tribes as indicated above is small in this district in comparison to the population of the Scheduled Castes and other Backward Classes. The break-up figures are not available.

The following castes or groups of Saharsa district were notified as Scheduled Castes under the Indian Constitution (Scheduled Castes) Order, 1950:—

(1) Bauri, (2) Bantar, (3) Bhogta, (4) Chamar, (5) Chaupal, (6) Dhobi, (7) Dom, (8) Dusadh (including Dhari or Dharhi), (9) Ghari, (10) Halalkhor, (11) Hari (including Mehtar), (12) Kanjar, (13) Kurariar, (14) Lalbegi, (15) Mochi, (16) Musahar (17) Nat, (18) Pan, (19) Pasi, (20) Rajwar, (21) Turi, (22) Bhumij.

* This great drop in the figure is not understandable. The local authorities could not satisfactorily explain. This small figure cannot be accepted as even approximately correct.

The following castes or groups of the Saharsa district were notified as Scheduled Tribes under the Constitution (Scheduled Tribes) Order, 1950:—

(1) Asur, (2) Baiga, (3) Bahudi, (4) Bedia, (5) Binjhia, (6) Birhor, (7) Birjia, (8) Chero, (9) Chik Baraik, (10) Gond, (11) Gorait, (12) Ho, (13) Karmali, (14) Kharia, (15) Kherwar, (16) Khond, (17) Kisan, (18) Kora, (19) Korwa, (20) Lohara, (21) Mahili, (22) Mal Paharia, (23) Munda, (24) Oraon, (25) Parhaiya, (26) Santal, (27) Sauria Paharia, (28) Savar.

The following castes or groups of the Saharsa district have been classified as Backward Classes. All others are included in the non-Backward category:—

(1) Bari, (2) Banpar, (3) Beldar, (4) Bhathiara (Muslim), (5) Bherihar, (6) Bhuiya, (7) Bind, (8) Chik (Muslim), (9) Dafali (Muslim), (10) Dhanuk, (11) Dhunia (Muslim), (12) Gorhi (including Chabbi), (13) Hajam, (14) Kahar, (15) Kassab (Kassai Muslim), (16) Kewat (Kent), (17) Khatik, (18) Mali, (19) Mallah, (20) Madari (Muslim), (21) Miriasee (Muslim), (22) Nat (Muslim), (23) Noriya, (24) Pamaria (Muslim), (25) Sheikhara, (26) Tantis, (27) Turha, (28) Bedia, (29) Chaim, (30) Gandharb, (31) Ganganta, (32) Kadar, (33) Naiya, (34) Tiar, (35) Dhobi (Muslim), (36) Halalkhor, (37) Lalbegi, (38) Mehatar (Muslim).*

A separate department at Government level known as the Welfare Department looks after the interests of these men. This department works through a District Welfare Officer at the district level. The District Welfare Officer has his own staff consisting of one Assistant Welfare Officer, 16 Welfare Inspectors and 10 *Kalyan* Grain *Gola Sewaks*. He has no break-up figures of the communities for whom he is expected to work.

The main functions of the District Welfare Officer relate to the removal of disabilities of Backward Classes, Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes, spread of literacy and education among them, arrangement for loan and subsidies, medical aid, grain golas and sinking wells, etc. He has also to see that the Bihar Harijan Act, 1949, is implemented. The Act provides that no Harijan can be denied access (*i*) to any river, pool, pond, stream, bathing *ghat*, well, tank, water tap, etc., (*ii*) to any public conveyance plying for hire, (*iii*) to or using any building, place or institution used for charitable or public purposes maintained wholly or partially by Bihar Government or local authority, (*iv*) to or using a place of public amusement, entertainment, (*v*) to join any institution, fair, meeting, (*vi*) religious institution, including a temple, *math*, shrine or *dharmashala*,

* Extract from *District Census Handbook*, Saharsa, page 65.

(*vii*) to a shop to which the members of all other castes are admitted, etc. The punishment under the Act is simple imprisonment which may extend to six months or with fine which may extend to five hundred rupees or with both. The Act defines Harijan as a person belonging to the Scheduled Caste as defined in clause (24) of Article 366 of the Constitution.

Grain golas.

Twelve grain *golas* have been established in this district till March, 1963 to give seed on credit and also grain for food in times of scarcity. These grain *golas* supply seeds at 25 per cent rate of interest for the first year and thereafter 6¼ per cent compound interest for each succeeding year. Previously, this facility was for the persons belonging to the Scheduled Tribes only but due to subsequent amendments in the rules Scheduled Castes and other Backward Classes of Annexure I may also get the benefit of these *golas*.

The statement below has been supplied by the District Welfare Officer regarding the working of the grain *golas*:—

Serial no.	Name of the places where grain *gola* is situated.	Name of the concerning police-station.	Year of opening.	Persons benefited during 1961-62.	
				Rs.	
1	Sonbarsa ..	Sonbarsa ..	1957-58 ..	154	
2	Kamp ..	Sourbazar ..	1958-59 ..	187	(The figures include Scheduled Tribes and Backward classes).
3	Madhepura ..	Madhepura ..	1956-57 ..	210	
4	Tribeniganj ..	Tribeniganj ..	1957-58 ..	312	
5	Singheshwar ..	Singheshwar ..	1957-58 ..	214	
6	Raghopur ..	Pratapganj ..	1956-57 ..	189	
7	Mahisi ..	Dharhara ..	1961-62 ..	193	
8	Murliganj ..	Murliganj ..	1956-57 ..	145	
9	Gamharia ..	Murliganj ..	1961-62 ..	324	
10	Gwalpara ..	Uda Kishanganj	1958-59 ..	314	
11	Giridharpatti ..	Chattapur ..	1959-60 ..	221	
12	Mahuabazar ..	Sonbarsa ..	1961-62 ..	178	

The figures show that very few persons were benefited.

Agricultural Subsidy.

The agricultural subsidy granted to the agriculturists belonging to the Scheduled Castes, Scheduled Tribes and Backward Classes for the last six years is given below. It may be mentioned that since only 1960-61 the Scheduled Tribes were given agricultural subsidy. Since 1961-62 the State Government has stopped to give agricultural subsidy to the Backward Classes people:—

Year.	Scheduled Castes.	Backward Classes.	Scheduled Tribes.
	Rs.	Rs.	Rs.
1957-58	4,320	Not available.	
1958-59	11,000	5,793	Not started.
1959-60	14,000	9,100	
1960-61	10,000	4,500	4,000
1961-62	4,000	Closed	4,000
1962-63	4,200		4,000

The agricultural subsidy is meant for the purchase of bullocks, manure and seed.

Housing Scheme.

In order to provide houses for the homeless Harijans the housing scheme was introduced. The construction is sanctioned at an estimated cost of Rs. 1,250 per house, out of which the Government's contribution is Rs. 937.50 per house. Generally, the beneficiary contributes the remaining in form of labour, raw materials, etc

Regarding the housing scheme it has been observed that even 25 per cent of the public contribution does not come forward and as such there is great difficulty in completion of housing schemes in the district.

The chart below supplied by the District Welfare Office, Saharsa, shows the location of the schemes which have been completed up to March, 1963. It shows a very poor contribution.

TABLE.

Under the State-sponsored Scheme for Scheduled Castes.

Serial no.	Name of schemes.	Name of Block.	Name of place where the schemes were taken up.	Year of sanction.	Total amount spent.	Number of houses completed.
1	2	3	4	5	6	7
					Rs.	
1	Housing Scheme for Scheduled Castes..	(1) Kahra ..	Sunindabad .. 11	1953-54 ..	6,403	19
		(2) Mahisi ..	Gangjola .. 1			
		(3) Chousa ..	Mahisi .. 1			
			Chousayar . 1			
		(4) Murliganj ..	Belo .. 5			
2	Ditto ditto ..	(1) Sourbazar ..	Barsam .. 13	1955-56 ..	18,710	42
			Kajuri . 1			
		(2) Supaul ..	Supaul .. 1			
		(3) Madhepura ..	Barauni .. 6			
		(4) Singheshwar ..	Ekma .. 6			
		(5) Uda Kishanganj ..	Madhepura .. 3			
			Singheshwar .. 1			
			Kusthar .. 11			
		(6) Kahra ..	Dumrail . 6	1957-58 ..	4,950	6
3	Ditto ditto ..	(1) Kahra ..	Manha .. 8	1959-60 ..	26,250	10
		(2) Kishanganj ..	Mohanpur .. 12			
		(3) Tribeniganj ..	Babhangama .. 8			
4	Centrally-sponsored Scheme for Scheduled Castes.	(1) Kahra ..	Dumrail .. 3	1957-58 ..	21,450	26
			Menha .. 10			
		(2) Supaul ..	Melhad .. 13			

1	2	3	4	5	6	7
					Rs.	
5	Centrally-sponsored Scheme for Scheduled Castes.	(1) Sonbarsa ..	Deohat .. 6	1958-59 ..	17,812.50	13
		(2) Madhepura ..	Madhepura .. 9			
		(3) Chousa ..	Lawalagaon .. 4			
6	Ditto ditto ..	(1) Sourbazar ..	Kamp .. 7	1959-60 ..	21,562.50	13
		(2) Singheshwar ..	Singheshwar .. 8			
		(3) Supaul ..	Chaughara .. 6			
		(4) Tribeniganj ..	Babhangama .. 2			
7	Ditto ditto ..	(1) Kahra ..	Kahra .. 9	1960-61 ..	18,756	10
		(2) Murliganj ..	Ratanpalli .. 14			
8	Ditto ditto ..	Singheshwar ..	Singheshwar .. 7	1961-62 ..	6,562.50	7
		Centrally-sponsored Scheme for Scheduled Tribes.				
1	Ditto ditto ..	Murliganj ..	Damgaria .. 10	1960-61 ..	9,375	No houses have been completed.
2	Ditto ditto ..	Saharsa ..	(1) Bihaso .. 12	1960-61 ..	28,125	No houses have been completed.
			(2) Agwanpur .. 18			

These houses are occupied by the Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes but these are not adequate for the population of about three lakhs.

Educational Welfare.

Arrangements have been made to encourage education among the boys of the Scheduled Castes, Scheduled Tribes and other Backward Classes by giving them stipends, granting exemption from school fees and book-grants. Free hostel accommodation has been provided to some extent. The details regarding educational welfare have been discussed in the chapter "Education and Culture".

Hostels.

Special hostels the expenditure of which is borne by the Government have been provided for the Harijans. There are such hostels at Saharsa and Madhepura with 25 and 50 seats respectively. Each of the boarders gets a grant of Rs. 20 per month.

Drinking Water Facilities.

During the First Five-Year Plan no tube-well or well was sunk by the Welfare Department. During the Second Five-Year Plan 1,339 tube-wells and 45 wells were sunk from the fund of the Welfare Department in the district. The Government contributes 75 per cent of the estimated cost and the villagers are required to contribute the remaining in the form of labour, etc. The district needs more wells and tube-wells to meet the necessity of the Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes and people in general. Although these wells are specially sunk in Harijan *bustees*, there is no restriction on the Harijans to use other wells.

Medical Facilities.

The Welfare Department gives grants to the needy among the Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes for medical facilities. The statement below gives the figures for four years:—

Year.	Scheduled Castes.	Scheduled Tribes.
	Rs.	Rs.
1959-60	1,174	400
1960-61	1,275	700
1961-62	1,700	1,000
1962-63	1,700	1,000

Legal Aid.

The Welfare Department provides legal aid to the indigent Backward Class individuals who may be involved in cases relating to ejectment from land, house-site or a house and in money-suits and the like.

The table given below shows the amount paid to the Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes as legal aid:—

Year.	Scheduled Castes.	Scheduled Tribes.
	Rs.	Rs.
1959-60	1,400	800
1960-61	1,700	1,000
1961-62	1,700	200
1962-63	1,700	200

It has to be observed that while the State is not responsible for the usual range of services covering subsistence for the needy, education and health services for all, housing, employment or maintenance, the care of the aged or handicapped persons, the care of children and mothers, sickness, maternity, retirement pensions, etc., as the state is in Great Britain, both the State and the Central Government have tried to discharge their implicit obligations to some extent. It is unfortunate that voluntary organisations are so few and the few that exist also depend more or less on Government subsidy to work in the sphere of social welfare. The paucity of voluntary social services supplementing the State services is painful. They hardly merge into each other and the two types are neither complementary nor competitive. Some of the *zamindars* and other non-officials did pioneer social services but the contribution was meagre and the source has now dried up.

Public Life and Voluntary Social Service Organisation.

First General Election of 1952.

After the attainment of independence in 1947 the First General Election was held in 1952 in Saharsa sub-district. This election was a unique feature as it was held for the first time on the basis of adult franchise.

Legislative Assembly.—In the 1952 General Election there were nine constituencies for Bihar *Vidhan Sabha* out of which two were plural (double) and seven were single constituencies in the sub-district of Saharsa. At that time Saharsa was a part of Bhagalpur district. During the election, 5,52,384 persons or about 43 per cent of the total population of Saharsa sub-district were eligible for exercising their right to franchise.

The political parties that participated in the election for the 11 seats were of all-India character. The parties were, namely, Congress, Socialist, Communist, Praja Socialist Party and Jan Sangh. Besides, 13 Independent candidates contested the 10 Assembly seats with no success. The results of the 1952 General Election with regard to the Assembly seats have been given at the end of the chapter (statement marked A).*

*The figures relating to results of General Election, 1952, have been taken from the *Report on General Election*, 1952 (Government publication), pages [illegible].

Parliament seats.—In the General Election of 1952 there was no separate constituency for Parliamentary seat. However, some portions of this sub-district were included in the Darbhanga-*cum*-Bhagalpur constituency for Parliamentary seat. From this constituency a Congress candidate was elected.

General Election of 1957.

The General Election of 1957 was another landmark in the history of Parliamentary democracy in India. The Second Election in comparison with the First Election of 1952 was better planned and more systematically organised. Seats were reserved for the Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes on the basis of their population as determined by the Census Commissioner. The *status quo* was maintained in respect of the number of seats assigned to the Legislative Assembly of the State. In the Second General Election the poll was completed within a fortnight while in the First General Election it took three weeks to complete the poll. Saharsa was created a district in 1954.

Legislative Assembly.—The Second General Election was held in 1957 on the basis of the electoral rolls made in 1952 and in the subsequent years. For keeping an up-to-date record of the electorates, there is one District Election Office at the district headquarters with its subordinate subdivisional election offices. The Parliamentary and Assembly constituencies were delimited afresh on the basis of the census figures of 1951 under the provisions in Articles 82 and 170 (3) of the Indian Constitution.

There were nine constituencies out of which two were double member constituencies and seven were single-member constituencies for Legislative Assembly for the 1957 General Election in Saharsa district. The parties that participated in this election were the Congress, Praja Socialist Party, Communist, Janata and Jan Sangh. Besides, 24 Independent candidates also contested 11 seats and obtained two seats. The results of the 1957 General Election in respect of Assembly seats have been given at the end of the chapter (statement marked B).*

Parliamentary Election of 1957.

In the General Election of 1952 for the House of People, there was no separate constituency for Saharsa district. But in the 1957 Election there was one separate constituency for Saharsa district, namely, Saharsa constituency. The Congress, Praja Socialist Party and Independent candidates were the contestants and the seat was won by the Congress candidate. The details of this election have been furnished in a tabular form in Statement 'B'.

* The figures of the results of General Election, 1957, have been taken from the *Report on General Election in Bihar*, 1957, pages 153-154.

General Election of 1962.

With a view to avoid the chances of adopting unfair means, a new technique in casting vote was adopted during the 1962 Election. Previously, there were as many ballot boxes as there were candidates to contest the election and the voter was required to cast the ballot paper in the ballot box of the candidate of his choice. But this time, there was only one ballot box for all the contesting candidates and the voter was required to tick mark against the symbol of the party or the persons on the ballot paper. Moreover, this time the poll was completed within a week.

Legislative Assembly.—In Saharsa district there were 11 single-member constituencies for Legislative Assembly, out of which two constituencies, namely, Raghopur and Sonbarsa, were reserved for Scheduled Castes. The contesting parties that participated in the General Election of 1962 were the Congress, Praja Socialist Party, Jan Sangh, Swatantra and Socialist. This time only nine Independent candidates contested the election with no success. The details about the results of the Third General Election in respect of Assembly seats of Saharsa district have been given at the end of the chapter (statement marked C).*

Parliamentary Election of 1962.

In the General Election of 1962 for the House of People, there were three Parliamentary constituencies, namely, Saharsa, Bhagalpur-*cum*-Saharsa and Darbhanga-*cum*-Saharsa. Out of these three seats, two were won by the Congress Party and one by the Swatantra Party. The contesting parties were the Praja Socialist Party, Congress, Swatantra, Socialist and Communist. No Independent candidate contested the election. The results of the election have been given at the end of the chapter (statement marked C).

The position of the political parties at the different General Elections is evident from the following chart:—

Table 1 (Legislative Assembly).

Year in which the General Election was held.	Constituency.	Total no. of seats.	Number of seats won by the parties.	
1952	9	11	Congress ..	8
			Socialist ..	3
1957	9	11	Congress ..	8
			P. S. P. ..	1
			Independent ..	2
1962	11	11	Congress ..	7
			P. S. P. ..	2
			Socialist ..	2

* The figures of the results of 1962 General Election are based on the reports of the Returning Officer, Saharsa.

Table 2 (Parliament).

Year in which the General Election was held.			Constituency.	Total no. of seats.	No. of seats won by the parties.		
1952	..	..	1	1	Congress.		
1957	..	..	1	1	Congress.		
1962	..	..	3	3	Congress	..	2
					Swatantra	..	1

The above figures show that the number of seats won by the Congress party in the 1962 General Election in the district has come down from 8 in the 1957 General Election to 7, whereas the number of seats won by the Praja Socialist Party has increased from 1 to 2 in 1962 General Election. During 1957, no Socialist candidates won any seat in the Election but in 1962, two seats were won by Socialist. The Independent candidates had won two seats in 1957. But the Independent candidates lost all the seats in 1962 General Election. Moreover, not a single candidate of the Communist party was elected in the Legislative Assembly in 1952, 1957 and 1962 Elections.

On an analysis of the trends in the three General Elections, it is found that in this district there are five main political parties, namely, the Congress, Praja Socialist, Swatantra, Communist and Socialist.

The Congress Party has lost some seats in the last General Election in comparison with the General Elections of 1952 and 1957. Nevertheless, the Party won 7 seats out of 11 in the 1962 General Election. The Praja Socialist Party and Socialist Party seem to have improved their position and they could capture more seats in 1962 General Election. The trends show that an active and strong party machinery to fight the elections has a better advantage than individuals seeking election as Independent candidates. It is a fact that a large percentage of voters do not exercise their franchise.

It is clear that a political party has to nurse the constituency from before the elections. From this point of view, the Congress Party has got the best advantage being the Party that has formed the Government. The oppositionists, however, could mobilise public opinion against the ruling Party. Much depends on the strength of the organisation and the stature of the leaders.

Caste considerations have been found to be a major factor controlling the votes. The voters are led to believe that if they vote for a candidate of their own caste their economic interests will be served better. In some cases local causes have played a more important role than the broad policies of the parties participating in the General Elections. It is doubtful, if most of the voters voting for a particular party candidate knew and believed in the basic

policies of that party. But there is no doubt that political consciousness is growing definitely. In 1952 Elections the Congress Party ticket meant more than half of the victory at the polls. This is not the case now.

NEWSPAPERS.

No daily newspapers are published in the district but several English dailies published from elsewhere have a fair circulation. They are the *Indian Nation* and the *Searchlight* published from Patna and the *Statesman*, the *Hindustan Standard* and the *Amrita Bazar Patrika* published from Calcutta. The three Hindi dailies published from Patna, namely, the *Aryavarta*, the *Pradeep* and the *Navarastra* have also fair circulation in the district. The Bengali dailies *Ananda Bazar Patrika* and *Yugantar* and the Urdu dailies *Seyasat-e-jadid* of Kanpur, *Pratap* of Delhi and *Sada-e-Am* of Patna have some circulation. Among the English weeklies and periodicals published from elsewhere that have some circulation, mention may be made of *Blitz* and the *Illustrated Weekly*. Some weekly periodicals published from elsewhere, namely, *Dharmyug*, *Hindustan*, *Maya*, *Manohar*, *Manorma* in Hindi have fair circulation. Two monthly journals with short articles, namely, *Kalakar* in Hindi and *Avibyanjana* in Maithili published in the district have a very limited circulation.

The readership is painfully small. The number of libraries is poor. Correct figures of circulation of the language papers are not available. For this purpose it may be taken that each copy of the paper that is sold is read by about ten persons on the average in the villages. The newspapers in the few libraries are read on the average by 100 to 150 persons everyday. The language papers are making a better headway.

VOLUNTARY SOCIAL SERVICE ORGANISATIONS.

Bharat Sewak Samaj.

A branch of the *Bharat Sevak Samaj* was formed in Saharsa district in 1955. There are several committees consisting of officials and non-officials to implement the various items in the programme of the organisation.

It has an office at Saharsa and operates through its following wings:—

(*i*) Information Centre, (*ii*) Anti-corruption Centre, (*iii*) *Mahila* Section, and (*iv*) Youth and Camp Section.

The *Bharat Sewak Samaj* is functioning in sixteen Blocks or *anchals* in the district. With the help of public co-operation about 20 tanks, 30 community halls and 15 *Panchayat* houses have been constructed till March, 1963. The *Samaj* was associated at one stage with the construction of the Kosi barrage.

The branch of the *Samaj* runs a library and a few night schools. It tries to work out a social uplift programme in the villages with voluntary collaboration of the members and the villagers. The *Samaj* receives liberal Government patronage.

Bhoodan Movement.—The Bhoodan Movement was started in the district of Saharsa in 1951 when Shri Vinoba Bhave came to this district. His mission is to get lands from the landowners and to distribute them to the landless. The main objective is to propagate the right thought by which social and economic maladjustments could be corrected and a moiety of the owned land is prayed for distribution to those people in the village who have no lands. It is difficult to say that the idea has caught the imagination of the people. The response has been very poor.

In the district there were about 5,427 donors from 943 villages till 1962. They have donated an area of 15,432 acres to the organisation. It is not known what percentage of the area donated is good cultivable land.

Apart from the collection and donation of land, the district organisation running the Bhoodan Movement has several other organisations to look after. They are, *Ambar Vidyalaya* and *Vinogram* at Supaul, which impart training in *Charkha.*

The organisation also looks after the management of the donated villages in the district as well as *Khadi* work.

HARIJAN SEWAK SANGH.

For the welfare of the Harijans two institutions have been started, *viz.*: *Harijan Sewak Sangh* and *Dalit Varg Sangh* in 1953 and 1951 respectively. They are exclusively associated with the work of ameliorating the condition of the *Harijans.* This body depends on Government patronage for existence.

SAHARSA FOOTBALL AND ATHLETIC ASSOCIATION.

This Association was organised in 1954 and is affiliated to the Bihar State Sports Association. It has a Working Committee with about twelve members with the District Magistrate, Saharsa, as the President. It receives some Government aid from the Youth Welfare Fund and also from the discretionary fund of the Commissioner, Bhagalpur Division. The main work of this Association is to give affiliation to sports, clubs and teams of the district. Besides, it runs one tournament in football, viz., "Nathan Shield". The Association has done a lot of useful work and has made the evening in some seasons lively in Saharsa which has very little of social amenities.

STATEMENT 'A'.

Name of constituencies.	Number of seats.	Number of candidates. Total.	Number of candidates. Contesting.	Total number of electors.	Total number of votes polled.	Party affiliations.	Number of votes obtained by each candidate.
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
						1952 Assembly General Election.	
1. Nirmali ..	1	4	4	45,441	19,949	(1) Congress	13,733 (elected).
						(2) Socialist	4,586
						(3) Jan Sangh	1,106
						(4) Praja Socialist Party.	434
2. Pratapganj ..	1	3	3	47,374	24,242	(1) Congress	16,437 (elected).
						(2) Socialist	6,893
						(3) Independent	912
3. Supaul ..	1	2	2	51,018	25,502	(1) Congress	16,676 (elected).
						(2) Socialist	8,826
4. Tribeniganj-*cum*-Madhepura.	2	5	5	1,18,015	38,659	(1) Congress	17,838 (elected).
						(2) Congress	17,683 (elected to reserved seat).
						(3) Socialist	17,172
						(4) Socialist	17,114
						(5) Independent	7,510
5. Dharhara ..	1	4	4	52,260	24,266	(1) Socialist	10,884 (elected).
						(2) Congress	10,415
						(3) Independent	1,600
						(4) Ditto ..	1,367
6. Sour Bazar-*cum*-Sonbarsa.	2	8	8	89,168	32,971	(1) Congress	15,572 (elected).
						(2) Socialist	14,109 (elected to reserved seat).
						(3) Congress	11,116
						(4) Socialist	10,948
						(5) Independent	5,313
						(6) Ditto ..	4,899
						(7) Ditto ..	3,037
						(8) Praja Socialist Party.	2,057
7. Murliganj ..	1	3	3	54,868	26,484	(1) Congress	14,636 (elected)
						(2) Socialist	9,872
						(3) Independent	1,976
8. Kishanganj ..	1	4	4	39,618	17,985	(1) Congress	8,160 (elected)
						(2) Socialist	4,407
						(3) Independent	3,658
						(4) Ditto ..	1,769
9. Alamnagar ..	1	5	5	54,622	23,943	(1) Socialist	8,549 (elected).
						(2) Congress	8,159
						(3) Independent	3,778
						(4) Ditto ..	2,004
						(5) Ditto ..	1,[illegible]

STATEMENT 'B'.

Name of constituencies.	Number of seats.	Number of candidates. Total.	Contesting.	Total number of electors.	Total number of votes polled.	Party affiliations.	Number of votes obtained by each candidate.
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
						1957 Assembly General Election.	
1. Supaul ..	1	3	3	70,343	31,780	(1) Praja Socialist Party.	16,031 (elected).
						(2) Independent	7,633
						(3) Communist	8,116
2. Kishanpur ..	1	3	3	83,792	37,775	(1) Praja Socialist Party.	3,917
						(2) Congress	22,534 (elected).
						(3) Independent	11,324
3. Pratapganj ..	1	6	6	50,622	23,417	(1) Independent	6,019
						(2) Ditto ..	929
						(3) Praja Socialist Party.	1,819
						(4) Independent	965
						(5) Congress	8,771 (elected).
						(6) Independent	4,914
4. Tribeniganj ..	2	8	8	1,01,356	35,363	(1) Independent	1,597
						(2) Congress	18,475 (elected).
						(3) Praja Socialist Party.	4,565
						(4) Independent	13,268
						(5) Congress	18,661 (elected to reserved seat).
						(6) Independent	8,887
						(7) Ditto ..	2,145
						(8) Praja Socialist Party.	3,029
5. Murliganj ..	1	4	4	49,533	21,616	(1) Congress	11,515 (elected).
						(2) Independent	3,176
						(3) Ditto ..	3,959
						(4) Praja Socialist Party.	2,986

STATEMENT 'B'—*concld.*

Name of constituencies.	Number of seats.	Number of candidates. Total.	Number of candidates. Contesting.	Total number of electors.	Total number of votes polled.	Party affiliations.	Number of votes obtained by each candidate.
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
6. Madhepura ..	1	3	3	60,862	24,350	(1) Praja Socialist Party.	1,986
						(2) Congress	9,676
						(3) Independent	12,694 (elected).
7. Saharsa ..	1	7	7	62,227	31,443	(1) Praja Socialist Party.	10,544
						(2) Independent	4,327
						(3) Ditto ..	1,844
						(4) Ditto ..	1,442
						(5) Congress	10,923 (elected).
						(6) Janata ..	496
						(7) Independent	1,887
8. Sonbarsa ..	2	7	7	1,04,101	43,828	(1) Praja Socialist Party.	4,691
						(2) Independent	13,440
						(3) Ditto ..	17,067
						(4) Congress	20,868 (elected).
						(5) Independent	5,844
						(6) Praja Socialist Party.	9,596
						(7) Congress	16,149 (elected to reserved seat).
9. Alamnagar ..	1	6	6	59,802	26,072	(1) Independent	7,937 (elected).
						(2) Ditto ..	3,693
						(3) Ditto ..	3,781
						(4) Communist	6,208
						(5) Praja Socialist Party.	1,457
						(6) Independent	3,026
1957 *Parliament Election.*							
1. Saharsa ..	2	9	9	7,14,197	3,17,710	(1) Independent	20,697
						(2) Praja Socialist Party.	43,565
						(3) Congress	1,52,647 (elected).
						(4) Independent	53,115
						(5) Communist	54,537
						(6) Ditto ..	53,579
						(7) Congress	1,32,[illegible] (elected to reserved seat).
						(8) Praja Socialist Party.	45,[illegible]
						(9) Independent	79,[illegible]

STATEMENT 'C'.

Name of constituencies.	Number of seats.	Number of candidates. Total.	Number of candidates. Contesting.	Total number of electors.	Total number of votes polled.	Party affiliations.	Number of votes obtained by each candidate.
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
						1962 Assembly General Election.	
1. Supaul ..	1	5	5	1,01,212	59,292	(1) Praja Socialist Party.	25,404 (elected).
						(2) Congress	23,845
						(3) Socialist	3,610
						(4) Independent	712
						(5) Swatantra	2,707
2. Singheshwar ..	1	3	3	58,047	21,129	(1) Socialist	10,280 (elected).
						(2) Congress	8,059
						(3) Swatantra	1,664
3. Kishanganj ..	1	7	7	61,891	21,123	(1) Communist	2,132
						(2) Independent	854
						(3) Swatantra	4,435
						(4) Congress	10,244 (elected).
						(5) Praja Socialist Party.	1,080
						(6) Socialist	1,149
						(7) Independent	371
4. Kishanpur ..	1	4	4	1,05,196	49,861	(1) Praja Socialist Party.	4,122
						(2) Swatantra	6,162
						(3) Congress	19,215 (elected).
						(4) Socialist	17,270
5. Tribeniganj ..	1	4	4	52,941	22,698	(1) Independent	1,144
						(2) Congress	9,603 (elected).
						(3) Socialist	8,392
						(4) Swatantra	2,442
6. Raghopur ..	1	4	4	57,837	29,578	(1) Swatantra	2,664
						(2) Socialist	11,880
						(3) Independent	682
						(4) Congress	13,519 (elected).
7. Murliganj ..	1	4	4	66,475	33,791	(1) Congress	12,267
						(2) Swatantra	2,586
						(3) Communist	1,400
						(4) Socialist	15,664 (elected).
8. Alamnagar ..	1	7	7	68,735	31,081	(1) Congress	10,796 (elected).
						(2) Swatantra	3,708
						(3) Praja Socialist Party.	1,101
						(4) Socialist	1,963
						(5) Independent	1,253
						(6) Communist	1,232

STATEMENT 'C'—*concld.*

Name of constituencies.	Number of seats.	Number of candidates. Total.	Number of candidates. Contesting.	Total number of electors.	Total number of votes polled.	Party affiliations.	Number of votes obtained by each candidate.
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
9. Madhepura ..	1	2	2	75,115	35,716	(1) Socialist	9,507
						(2) Congress	24,451 (elected).
10. Saharsa ..	1	5	5	85,640	46,757	(1) Swatantra	5,194
						(2) Praja Socialist Party.	26,810 (elected).
						(3) Independent	4,141
						(4) Congress	7,286
						(5) Independent	606
11. Sonbarsa ..	1	Not available.		..	..	..	..

1962 *Parliament Election.*

Name of constituencies.	Number of seats.	Number of candidates. Total.	Number of candidates. Contesting.	Total number of electors.	Total number of votes polled.	Party affiliations.	Number of votes obtained by each candidate.
1. Saharsa ..	1	3	3	4,26,757	2,06,752	(1) Socialist	97,038 (elected).
						(2) Swatantra	18,218
						(3) Congress	81,995
2. Sonbarsa (Bhagalpur-*cum*-Sonbarsa).	1	5	5	61,891	21,122	(1) Communist	34,399
						(2) Socialist	29,032
						(3) Congress	92,622 (elected).
						(4) Praja Socialist Party.	8,832
						(5) Swatantra	21,466
3. Rosera ..	1	2	2	1,01,212	59,264	(1) Socialist	55,076
						(2) Congress	1,22,921 (elected).

CHAPTER XVII.

PLACES OF INTEREST.

Alamnagar village.—The last *District Gazetteer of Bhagalpur,* 1911 by J. Byrne, mentions as follows:—

> "Alamnagar situated in *pargana* Chhai, in North latitude 25°33'45" and East longitude 86°56'21", about 7 miles south-west of Kishanganj, was once the principal village of the Chandel chiefs, who possessed fifty-two adjacent townships, and a considerable revenue. These Rajas were highly esteemed in the district until the grandfather of the present holder of the estate wasted his property, ruining himself and his heirs. At present but two villages out of the fifty-two remain to the family. Traces of many fine tanks and the earthen work ramparts of forts are still visible. These and a masonry manor house, now in ruins alone remain to show the former wealth of the owners. The prevailing castes of the village are Rajputs and Brahmins."*

With the abolition of *zamindari* and other basic changes Alamnagar is different from what Byrne observed. The population according to 1951 census is 7,006 (3,767 males and 3,239 females) and there are 1,383 households. The total number of literate persons are 790, i.e., 632 males and 158 females. The houses are mostly mud-built with straw roofing. There are also about fifty brick-built houses belonging to big cultivators or Government servants or businessmen who are mostly Maithil Brahmins and Rajputs. The population in 1961 census is not yet published.

The main language spoken by the people of this village is Maithili. The village has a post office since 1947, a multipurpose co-operative society, a State dispensary with six indoor beds, a Veterinary dispensary, a police-station. It is the headquarters of Alamnagar Development Block.

Apparently smooth inter-caste relations break out in bickerings at the time of elections. The village has been divided into six *tolas* and the scheduled castes people, viz., Chamar, Dusadh, Pasi, etc., have their own *tolas*. The higher caste people have their separate *tolas*. The predominant caste is that of the Rajputs. The family of the ex-*zamindars* belongs to this caste. The richer section is very fond of shooting wild games.

* Extract from the old *Gazetteer of Bhagalpur*, p. 107.

The main occupation of the people of the village is cultivation. There are about 325 persons holding services outside the village. Cultivators produce mainly paddy, maize and jute. The income of the village from the service holders is about Rs. 40,000 per month.

Only a few persons are engaged in trade and commerce. The village has one permanent market and a *hatia* is also held on Mondays and Fridays. There are about ten *kirana* shops in the village. Besides, three medical stores have been started in the village.

The village roads are *kutcha*. It has a High school established in 1952 with about 300 students and 12 teachers, five Lower Primary schools, one Middle school for boys and one Middle school for girls. A library named Alamnagar *Pustakalaya* was established in 1943.

The village has a *Gram Panchayat*. A *mela* is held in the village on the eve of Durga Puja and Deepavali. There are two temples, two *Thakurbaris* and one mosque.

For water-supply to the village the State Government have constructed about 50 tube-wells and the villagers themselves have constructed 100 tube-wells.

Aligarh (*Amrit Garh*).—It is a fort located about seven miles from Sonbarsa Railway Station. It has a legend that this was the place where several thousands of cows of King Birat were kept. The area is said to be of antiquity and closely associated with the Mahabharata.

Excavations have brought out very old wells octangular in shape, thick walls and with human bones. There is also an old temple.

Bangaon.—This village in Sadar subdivision is situated at a distance of 6 miles west of Saharsa town. The village is very ancient and thickly populated with Maithils. The name of this village 'Bangaon' indicates that it was once full of forests.

The approximate population of this village according to 1961 census is 12,066 having 2,431 households.* The houses are mostly mud-built with straw roofing. There are also a few brick-built houses.

Prior to the declaration of Saharsa as a district, the present Saharsa police-station and sub-registry office were located at Bangaon. In 1954 when Saharsa became a district, the police-station and sub-registry office were shifted from Bangaon.

A large number of families of Maithil Brahmin caste at Bangaon have got the hereditary title of "Khan" given to them by the Moghal kings in recognition of their loyalty to the Government. A Maithil Brahmin *Vaibahik Sabha* is held at Bangaon in the months

* The final 1961 Census figures for the villages have not yet been published. (P. C. R. C.).

of April-May every year which lasts for a week where marriage negotiations for the Maithil Brahmins only are settled. On investigation it was ascertained that now this marriage system is on the decline because the people have heavy expenditure in journey and in settling and performing the marriage. This *sabha* is similar to the one held at Saurath in Darbhanga district.

The inter-caste relations are not so good and there is bickering on account of caste and creed distinction at the time of election. The village has been divided into five *tolas*, viz., Sanmukhi *tola*, Rampur *tola*, Chaudhury *tola*, Pachwa *tola* and Dakhinwari *tola*. The people belonging to scheduled caste, namely, Dusadh, Chamar, Pasi and even Muhammadans have got separate *tolas*. The village is dominated by the Maithil Brahmins and about 8,000 of the total population are Maithils.

The main occupations of the village are cultivation and service. About 20 per cent of the villagers are employed in service outside the district. The main crops are paddy and maize. Horticulture has great possibilities.

The village has four Primary schools, one Middle girls' school, one High school and one Sanskrit High school. There are about 100 students from the village who go to Saharsa for college education.

There are two *gram panchayats* established in 1951, four libraries, viz., Chedi Narain Library, Ram Krishna Library, Lakshmi Nath *Pustkalaya* and Satyabhama *Pustkalaya*, one co-operative credit society, one Dak Bungalow, a Veterinary dispensary, a permanent retail market, four Fair Price Shops, one *hat* held on every Wednesday and Saturday and one *goshala* maintained by Government established in 1922 in the village.

The State Government have built a hospital since 1927. The hospital has 10 beds for patients. The following are the statistics of the patients for 1960-61 and 1961-62:—

Year.	Outdoor patients treated.	Indoor patients treated.
1960-61	16,326	176
1961-62	17,842	198

The village has a post office established in 1943. It is under the administrative control of the Superintendent of Post Offices at Saharsa. On the average 147 money orders are received every month for the average amount of Rs. 8,634. The average number of money orders sent every month comes to 342 with the amount of 21,341. The reasons for it is that many students of this village are reading in colleges in Patna, Ranchi, Sindri, Bhagalpur, etc.

The village is electrified and about two hundred houses have got electricity. The household owner has to pay 46 P. per unit as electric charge.

The village may now be called a suburb of Saharsa as it has constant direct contact with Saharsa through road, Rickshaws and *tamtams* are always available.

There is a *kirtan mandali* in the village where religious songs are sung. There is a community hall where villagers gather in every evening and discuss village problems.

The village is under Kahra Block. It is one of the large villages in the district and has an enlightened population.

Basantpur.—A village in Sonbarsa police-station at a distance of about 15 miles from Madhepura to the south. There are ruins of a fort and it is said that it was the residence of the legendary King Birat of Mahabharata fame. Kichak the brother-in-law of King Birat wanted to entice away Droupadi, the wife of the Pandavas who was killed by Bhim at this village. This is the legend.

Biratpur—Chandika Asthan.—Village Biratpur at about six miles from Sonbarsa Railway Station is famous for a temple of Chandika deity. Tradition associates the temple with stories of the Mahabharata.

It is said that this temple was at the main gate of the palace of King Birat of Mahabharata.* There is an inscription on the stone-pillar lying outside the temple suggesting that the temple was remodelled in the 11th century by King Kumudanand Chandra. There is no doubt that this is a place of antiquity. There are two *stupas* supposed to the Buddhistic. The present temple is said to be about 300 years old and is in a bad condition. The temple attracts many worshippers.

There is one hillock (*tilha*) just about half a mile west to the temple and people believe that Kunti and her five sons (the Pandavas) used to reside at this place.

The village has a total population of 4,321 souls with an area of 793 acres and 438 occupied houses according to 1961 census.

It has a High school, two Middle schools, three Primary schools, one health centre, one Veterinary dispensary, a post office and a *gram panchayat*. There is permanent market containing a few small retail shops. A *hat* is also held here on every Wednesday.

Birpur Town.—Birpur, a township that has grown out of Kosi Barrage Scheme is located at almost the frontier of Saharsa district and within a few miles of the limits of Nepal. It is not

* It is to be mentioned here that in different parts of Bihar, quite distant from one another there are places with similar legends of Ramayana and Mahabharata. (P. C. R. C.).

directly connected by rail from Saharsa, the district headquarters, but is accessible by rail from Forbesganj or Bathnaha in Purnea district. This means a circuitous railway journey from Saharsa to Mansi, Mansi to Forbesganj or Bathnaha *via* Katihar and then a road journey of about 25 miles.

Birpur is connected with Saharsa by road *via* Supaul or *via* Madhepura but not by an all-weather road. Bus services do not ply on these routes regularly and stop in the rainy season. Bhimnagar and Birpur are well connected by bus services to Forbesganj and from there to Araria, Banmankhi, Katihar and Purnea. When there is an all-weather road from Saharsa to Birpur *via* Supaul, Birpur may be reached within two or three hours.

Birpur has an area of about 5.19 square miles with 8,061 souls, i.e., 4,946 males and 3,115 females according to 1961 census. Birpur has been declared to be a town in 1961 census and prior to that it was a village with an area of 2,076 acres and 3,033 souls according to 1951 census. On local enquiry it was ascertained that about 100 years back Birpur was a centre of boat trade and traders from Bhagalpur, Patna and other districts used to come here to purchase boats. Boats were taken through different channels of Kosi river to Kursela where Kosi meets the Ganga. It is understood that making of boats and their sale was confined to an area known as "*Golagachhi*".*

The importance of the town is due to the Kosi Project which is engaged in the construction of Kosi Barrage, embankment and canals, etc. Birpur with its satellite village Bhimnagar at a distance of three miles is in active touch with Saptari district of Nepal with Hanumannagar as its headquarters. The place was selected as headquarters for the Kosi Project in 1955 as the site of the main barrage was located in Nepal territory within 10 miles of Birpur. After this the small number of Goalas and Kalwars of Birpur village found them literally overwhelmed by an influx of population.

After Birpur was selected as the headquarters of Kosi Project the nearest railway station being Forbesganj, a first class tar macadamized road had to be built connecting Forbesganj with Birpur and then up to Bhimnagar. The barrage site is 3 miles from Bhimnagar in Nepal territory. This did away with the bullock-cart journey for two to three days through shrubs and jungles full with wild life. The provision of an access road from Forbesganj to Bhimnagar *via* Birpur was a vital pre-requisite for the execution of the project. A first class road of 26 miles was constructed in 1955 from Bathnaha and the road goes up to Bhimnagar *via* Birpur, the project headquarters. The road has 52 culverts and a major bridge.

* The information was gathered from Phucho Bhagat a man of Basantpur village. Phucho is about 115 years old (1963).

A narrow gauge railway line from Bathnaha to Dharan (in Nepal) *via* Birpur had to be laid. The railway line was constructed with a view to transport construction materials, viz., coal, cement, stone chips and iron and steel goods, etc. Dharan has a good quary for stone chips. The railway line and transport are managed by the Kosi administration.

Birpur had a large number of labour amenities provided during the construction period. Community centres for the labourers at every two miles of the embankment were set up. The average number of persons daily employed at the time of the construction of the barrage by Kosi Project Department was about 5,322. Most of them came from local villages of Saharsa district and from Shahabad, Saran, districts of Chotanagpur and Orissa. Recreation and social education centres were organised. Arrangements were also made at Birpur to supply rice to the labourers at the subsidised rate. Necessary medical facilities were provided. A 10-bedded hospital at Birpur and several health sub-centres at different villages were started.

All the supervision was done from Birpur which accommodated the supervisory and a good percentage of the subordinate staff.

As Kosi Barrage, Hydel Power Station, Baraha-Chhetra Observatory, the Meteorological Station, the Soil Conservation Station (in Nepal territory), etc., have already started attracting hundreds of visitors, tourism in this area is bound to develop. Birpur will have more importance as the place from where the tourists will spread out. With more roads and railways and air travel facilities Birpur will be an attraction.

The Kosi Project Department has a Kosi Guest House, an Inspection Bungalow and a Rest House with a total accommodation of about 30 persons at Birpur. The accommodation provided by the Kosi Department is both expensive and inadequate. There are no arrangements till now (1963) for the accommodation of students and the visitors of modest means. This is an ideal place for opening of a youth hostel and a cheap dormitory.

There are two recreation clubs, viz., Kosi Club and Workmen's Club. The clubs were established during 1955-56. The clubs receive grant from Kosi Project Department. The clubs have a good library with a few papers and arrangement for indoor games. The Kosi Club has a section for ladies.

Birpur has two Primary schools with a total strength of 250 students, two Middle schools established in 1941 and 1957 respectively, one Government subsidised girls' Middle school started in 1962 and one Government Multipurpose Higher Secondary school established in 1959. The Higher Secondary school is maintained by Kosi Project Department and the other schools are managed by the Government.

There are about 45 students who go to Forbesganj by bus for college education as there is no college at Birpur.

The Kosi Project Department has a hospital at Birpur since 1955. Details have been given in the text on Medical and Public Health Services.

The following are the statistics of the patients from 1958 to 1962:—

	1958	1959	1960	1961	1962
Outdoor patients treated.	14,627	30,242	47,207	63,756	57,950
Indoor patients treated.	543	3,601	8,296	9,285	9,257
Labour cases treated.	Nil	112	162	193	137

The indoor beds are not meant for Kosi Project employees only. The hospital is well-staffed but could be better equipped.

The town has a post and telegraph office established in 1955. It is under the administrative control of the Superintendent of Post Offices at Purnea. On the average, 259 money orders are received every month for the average amount of Rs. 13,329. The average number of money orders sent every month comes to 949 with the amount of Rs. 41,792. They show that the place is inhabited by outsiders mostly.

There is a telephone exchange since 1955 with 30 local installations. It is under the administrative control of the Mechanical division at Birpur.

A sub-treasury office was established in September 1958. The Administrative Officer of Kosi Project Department is the Sub-Treasury Officer who is under the administrative control of the District Magistrate at Saharsa. A sub-treasury had to be opened for the monetary transactions of Kosi Project. The table below supplied by the Sub-Treasury Officer, Birpur will give an idea of the figures of receipts and expenditure from 1958-59 to 1961-62:—

Year.	Receipts in Rupees.		Expenditure in Rupees.	
	Provincial.	Central.	Provincial.	Central.
1958-59	12,31,940 31	4,24,781.89	40,91,178.43	19,120.53
1959-60	14,93,452.41	13,02,790.88	1,23,69,453.42	1,33,694.29
1960-61	34,74,576.93	10,63,709.13	1,47,21,206.10	1,47,768.06
1961-62	42.94,656 00	10,720.00	1,90,98,591.86	1,34,191.35

A mechanical workshop was started by the Kosi Project in 1956. About 325 workers are employed here for repair and maintenance of the machineries and vehicles.

A Power House sponsored by Kosi Project Department was started in 1956. Electrical energy is generated and supplied to Birpur town, Barrage, Bhimnagar, etc. The town has a landing ground where light aeroplanes can only alight.

Regarding housing, the Kosi Department has built 1,062 houses for its 2,500 employees till 1962. There are no churches or mosques or proper burial or cremation ground. The town has very few private houses where a few businessmen and shop-keepers reside. Banking transaction is done at Forbesganj.

Birpur town has one small market for most of the essential commodities. The market is attended by about 40 sellers of different commodities. The bi-weekly *hat* is attended by about 45 sellers of different commodities and attended by about 700 persons. The retail prices of the commodities are slightly higher than that of Saharsa. The few shop-keepers of the town purchase articles from Nirmali and Forbesganj. There is no wholesale dealer in the town. Fish, meat, eggs and vegetables are available. An Employees' Co-operative Store was started in 1957. The number of customer is very small as purchase on credit basis is not allowed.

The town has one liquor shop. The daily average number of visitors to the shop is about 100.

The development of Birpur and the construction of the township has to be followed up either by making Birpur a subdivisional headquarters or by starting some industries. After the implementation of the scheme only a skeleton staff will be maintained and a large number of houses will be available for other purposes.

Dharhara.—This is a village in Pratapganj police-station situated at about 41 miles towards north-east from Saharsa *via* Madhepura and 45 miles towards north-east of Saharsa *via* Supaul. The village is mostly populated by the Goalas.

The population of this village according to 1951 census is 4,016 with an area of 2,317 acres and 763 households.

The place is noted for a Shiva temple. Apparently the temple had fallen into disuse owing to the Kosi ravages. Now the temple is again popular and a large number of pilgrims regularly visit the temple. An annual *mela* is held on *Shivaratri* day.

The village has a post office, two multipurpose co-operative societies, a *gram panchayat,* a State dispensary and a veterinary dispensary. It has also one High school since 1938, one Middle school, two Primary schools and one library.

Bi-weekly *hats* are held on every Wednesday and Sunday. The *hat* is well patronised by the neighbouring villagers.

Dharhara—Bhimshankar temple.—The village Dharhara near Ganpatganj has a temple of Lord Shiva. It is said that a Muhammadan gentleman had a dream one night that there was a temple of Lord Shiva near the village Dharahara at a depth of 25 feet. On digging a big Shiva *linga* was found. Every year a *mela* is organised in the said village during Shivratri.

Ghazipita.—This village is located in Sonbarsa police-station and about 16 miles to the south of Madhepura town. There is a temple of goddess Chandi in the village. With the idol of Chandi there is an idol of Budhai who is said to have been Dusadh by caste and a servant of Chandi. The worship is first made to Budhai and then to Chandi. Goats and buffaloes are sacrificed as offerings to the goddess Chandi. The *Pandas* are Goalas by caste and are called Debhara. Animal sacrifice is still common.

Kandaha.—The village Kandaha in Dharhara police-station at about ten miles west of Saharsa town and one and half miles north of Mahishi village is famous for a temple for Sun god. At the gate of the temple there is an inscription. There are other temples also near the Sun temple. The place is visited by many people of the neighbouring and outside the district in spite of the very bad roads. In the rainy season the place is not even jeepable.

There are very few Sun temples in India. In Bihar there is a Sun temple at Deo in Gaya district. The presence of this Sun temple at Kandaha is of interest. The temple shows some exquisite carvings.

The inscription on the temple has been deciphered. It is of the time of Narasimha Deva of the Oinwara dynasty who was a contemporary of Vidyapati.

Madheli.—This village in *thana* Madhepura, is about 10 miles from Madhepura town, to the north-east. It is situated on the District Board road from Chaora to Madheli. The river Daroswari flows to the east of it. The village is situated on a piece of high land and is not liable to floods as are the surrounding tracts. There is a mart where some Marwari traders and Kalwars deal in grain, *ghee*, jute, etc. To the south-east of Madheli is village Basantpur, which contains the ruins of a fort said to have belonged to the Rajas Shit and Basant.

Madhepura Subdivision.—Madhepura subdivision was formed in 1845 with headquarters at Madhepura. It has a total area of 681 square miles. It has two towns, namely, Madhepura and Murliganj according to 1961 census.

The total population of the subdivision according to the two last censuses are:—

Years.		Total population.	Males.	Females.
1951	..	8,76,651	4,52,408	4,24,243
1961	..	6,42,346	3,33,167	3,09,197

There are 449 villages and 1,06,152 number of houses.

The above figures indicate that during 1961 census, there has been a decrease in the incidence of population. It is because after Saharsa was given the status of a full-fledged district, a new subdivision, namely, Sadar subdivision was created in 1954. Saharsa Sadar subdivision was carved out of the previous Madhepura subdivision. Previously, Madhepura subdivision had three revenue *thanas*, namely, Bangaon, Kisanganj and Madhepura. Bangaon revenue *thana* remained entirely in Sadar subdivision.

An officer either of the Bihar Civil Service (Executive Branch) or the Indian Administrative Service is posted in charge of the subdivision. The Subdivisional Officer is directly under the administrative control of the District Magistrate. He has been, as usual, given a number of officers to help him in his work.

The Subdivisional Officer is responsible for the execution of all planning schemes in the subdivision and as the head of the subdivisional planning committee, it is his duty to co-ordinate the function of all the nation-building departments of the district. As the Chief Executive Officer of the subdivision, he is responsible for maintaining law and order and the smooth running of administration at the subdivisional level.

The Subdivisional Officer of Madhepura had the following gazetted officers under him on the 31st March, 1963:—

(1) Deputy Collector (Second Officer)—1.

(2) Deputy Collector in charge of Land Reforms and Revenue matters—1.

(3) Sub Deputy Collector—1.

(4) Anchal Adhikari-*cum*-Block Development Officer—7.

(5) Compensation Officer—1.

There are six police-stations, namely, Madhepura, Singheshwar, Murliganj, Kishanganj, Alamnagar and Chousa. The subdivision has got seven Anchals-*cum*-Development Blocks, namely. Murliganj, Madhepura, Kumarkhand, Singhwar, Kishanganj, Alamnagar and Chousa. There are two Notified Area Committees in Madhepura and Murliganj established in 1960 and 1957, respectively. The Subdivisional Officer is the Chairman of both the Notified Area Committees.

Gram Panchayat.—The *Gram Panchayat* plays an important role in the general administration of the subdivision. The Act was put into operation in Madhepura subdivision from 1948. At present (1963) there are 119 *gram panchayats* in Madhepura subdivision.

Incidence of Crime.—The incidence of crime is high in the subdivision. This is partially due to the location and physiography of the subdivision, proximity to Nepal, and high prices.

For police administration the subdivision has been divided into two circles, namely, Madhepura and Murliganj. They are headed by a Deputy Superintendent of Police at Madhepura and Murliganj respectively.

The subdivision has seven Inspectors of Police at Madhepura, Singhwar, Murliganj, Udakishanganj, Chousa, Kumarkhand and Alamnagar and fourteen Sub-Inspectors of Police at Madhepura, Singhwar, Murliganj, Udakishanganj, Chousa, Kumarkhand and Alamnagar. It has three outposts at Bharrhi (in Madhepura police-station) and Puraini (in Alamnagar police-station).

Election.—The Subdivisional Officer is the Subdivisional Election Officer and for day-to-day work he is assisted by the Second Officer. The Subdivisional Officer is the Electoral Registration Officer and Returning Officer.

There are altogether five Assembly constituencies, namely, Madhepura, Alamnagar, Kishanganj, Murliganj and Singhwar.

Co-operative Department.—The Circle Officer, Madhepura is under the control of the Assistant Registrar, Co-operative Society and the divisional head is the Deputy Registrar, Co-operative Societies, Bhagalpur. There is one Co-operative Inspector and one Local Auditor posted by the department in each Community Development Block and the general area is looked after by the Central Co-operative Bank. There are 890 co-operative societies and the total number of members is about 20,736.

Jail Department.—The Medical Officer of Madhepura Hospital is the administrative head of the Sub-jail, Madhepura. Under the Medical Officer there are one Assistant Jailor, two Head Warders, eight Warders and one dresser. The Sub-jail of Madhepura has a capacity of 69 prisoners (60 males and 9 females). There is no industry in this Sub-jail and only undertrial and short-term prisoners are kept in the Sub-jail.

Stamps.—There is a Sub Treasury Officer at Madhepura and the Second Officer is in charge of the office. The Subdivisional Officer is the head of the Sub-Treasury Officer.

The statement below, supplied by Madhepura Sub-Treasury Officer, will show the receipts from the sale of stamps:—

Year.		Non-judicial in rupees.	Judicial in rupees.
1958-59	..	92,283	4,833
1959-60	..	1,30,056	58,921
1960-61	..	1,71,103	62,625
1961-62	..	1,70,348	71,484

Civil Courts.—The Civil Courts for Saharsa district are located at Madhepura. There are the courts of a Sub-judge who is also the Assistant Sessions Judge and of several Munsifs. Details have been discussed elsewhere.

General.—There are five railway stations within the jurisdiction of Madhepura subdivision, namely, Mathai, Madhepura, Budhma, Murliganj and Bihariganj. The important trade centres are Murliganj and Bihariganj. Jute, bamboo and rice are the main trade commodities and they are mostly exported to Calcutta, Santal Parganas, Darbhanga, Ranchi, Patna, etc. There are six Inspection Bungalows at Madhepura, Gwalpara, Alamnagar, Murliganj, Bihariganj and Udakishanganj. Madhepura is connected with Saharsa town and Supaul town by both roadways and railways. It is also connected with Birpur town, Pratapganj and Pipra by roadways. Bihpur-Birpur road passes through this subdivision. The roads are generally fair-weather and during the rainy season buses do not ply.

The following places in the Madhepura subdivision have got historical and religious importance, namely, Singheshwarsthan, Srinagar, Sarsendi and Shahpur Chammukh, the details of which have been given elsewhere.

*Madhepura town**.—Madhepura at a distance of 16 miles north of Saharsa town is the administrative headquarters of Madhepura subdivision. The town is served by the railway station of the same name. The area is 3.06 sq. miles with a population of 11,832 souls (6,763 males and 5,069 females) according to 1961 census distributed over 1,990 occupied houses.

The headquarters of Madhepura subdivision was shifted to Supaul in June, 1934. Due to the great Bihar Earthquake of 1934, the course of the river Kosi had changed and the embankment protecting Madhepura town was seriously damaged. The headquarters remained at Supaul from 1934 to 1938 and during this period the importance of Madhepura naturally declined. The headquarters came back to Madhepura on 1st July, 1938. Kosi maintained its western swing and left Madhepura in 1938 and from that year Supaul town was in danger. Supaul headquarters had to be shifted to Saharsa in 1938.

* Madhepura is also written as Madhipura (P. C R. O.).

The river started affecting actively Madhepura subdivision from 1914 and from time to time preventive ring *bundhs* were put up to save the town. The putting up of the embankments made the area of the town smaller.

The American Mission under Rev. H. L. Smith had their headquarters at Madhepura since 1920. Due to the ravages of the Kosi, the Mission had to build another headquarters at Saharsa in 1935. Subsequently, the Mission built a fairly well equipped hospital at Madhepura. The hospital is staffed by American doctors. The hospital is rendering excellent services.

The Government hospital at Madhepura was completely water-logged owing to Kosi floods and had to be shifted to Bariahi near Saharsa in 1934. Later the hospital came back to Madhepura and for sometime was housed in the Civil Court building. Due to Kosi ravage the police-station was also shifted to Mathia village about 5 miles to the south of the Madhepura town. During the period the police headquarters were at Mathia where there was only a police outpost at Madhepura. The constant ravages of the Kosi had affected the prosperity of the town. Many families had to shift from place to place and some had left the town permanently. A number of lawyers and other persons associated with the courts had to shift to Supaul in 1934 when the courts were removed there. Madhepura town has now been stabilised and has started prospering once again. Owing to the long existence of the Civil Courts which incidentally have jurisdiction all over the district, Madhepura has always had an advantage over Supaul town. Even the creation of Saharsa district and the location of the district headquarters elsewhere has not affected the prosperity of Madhepura town. Madhepura town is much larger than Saharsa or Supaul and has more civic amenities.

A number of Government offices are located in the town. They include the offices of the Subdivisional Magistrate, Executive Engineer, Kosi Project, Assistant Registrar, Co-operative Societies, Assistant Commercial Taxes Superintendent, Subdivisional Officers, Public Works Department, Agriculture. Animal Husbandry, Deputy Superintendent of Police, etc. While a large number of Government and residential buildings of modern type have been built there are still hundreds of thatched houses in the town.

The town is connected by rail and road with Saharsa the district headquarters. The main roads in the town are metalled. The town has a Notified Area Committee. The work of the Notified Area Committee has been discussed elsewhere.

The town has a Dak Bungalow, a Kosi Inspection Bungalow and one *Dharmshala* which are quite inadequate because Madhepura town is important due to a religious place, i.e., Singheshwarasthan which is only five miles from the town. People in thousands from within and

outside the State come to worship Lord Shiva and the accommodation seems to be inadequate. There are also about 10 cheap roadside eating houses, 20 tea shops and 15 betel shops in the town.

There are two recreation clubs in the town. The clubs have small libraries and arrangements for indoor games.

There are nine Primary schools and two Middle schools under the management of the District Superintendent of Education, Saharsa in the town. Besides, the town has one Degree college with 475 students and 17 lecturers, four High schools, namely, Government Girls' High School, Madhepura with 245 students and ten teachers, Rastrabani Vidyalaya with 489 students and twenty teachers, Thakur Prasad Collegiate School with 439 students and 19 teachers and Multipurpose School with 389 students and 14 teachers.

There is a subdivisional hospital which was provincialised in 1950. Details of the hospital will be found in the text on "Medical and Public Health Services". The following are the statistics of patients for 1960-61 and 1961-62:—

Year.		Outdoor patients treated.	Indoor patients treated.
1960-61	..	54,321	21,327
1961-62	..	72,191	25,421

The town has a post office which was in existence in 1884. It is under the administrative control of the Superintendent of Post Offices at Purnea. On the average 1,243 money orders are received every month for the average amount of Rs. 67,742. The average number of money orders sent every month comes to 1,498 with the amount of Rs. 87,432. There is a telephone exchange at Madhepura since 1957 with 32 local connections.

There is one *Gudri* market under the management of the Notified Area Committee where vegetables, fish, meat, sweets, grains and fruits, etc., are sold. The annual income from the said market is between Rs. 3,550 to 5,000.

Mahisi.—This village is about 10 miles to the west of Saharsa town and 4 miles from village Bangaon in Dharara police-station. There is an all-weather road from Saharsa to Bangaon and from Bangaon to Mahisi there is a *kutcha* road Mahisi has a population of 7,000 persons with 1,135 number of occupied houses.

The village is ancient and according to commonly accepted legend this was the place where Mandan Mishra, the great philosopher of the 8th century A.D. lived. Shankaracharya came from the south and had a philosophic discussion first with Mandan Mishra and then with his wife, Bharati Devi. There is a mound at Mahisi village which is pointed out as the site where the philosophic discussion between Mandan Mishra and Shankaracharya had taken place.

Mahisi has an Ugratara temple and it is said that Mandan Mishra was a great devotee of Ugratara. This later Buddhistic deity has been imported into India from Tibet through Nepal. There is no other temple of Ugratara image in Bihar although a large number of specimens of Tara have been found in Kurkihar village and other places. In the Kaliji temple at Bettiah there is a fine image of Ugratara as has been described in the Buddhist Iconography. Ugratara is an image worshipped by the *tantrika*. The cult of tantricism has had a great development in the district of Saharsa. Tantricism is very common in Nepal which is on the borders of Saharsa district. The real Ugratara image is a fearful deity with a chain of human heads on her neck and the deity is standing on a dead-body. There should further be another small image on the forehead as described by Dr. Binoytosh Bhattacharya in his book*. Dr. Bhattacharya mentions "Corresponding to these Goddesses we find in the Hindu pantheon Tara, Ugra Tara, Ekajata and Maya-Nila-Saraswati. The *dhyanas* of these Goddesses, as found in the Hindu *tantra,* literally correspond to those found in the Buddhist *sadhana.* According to a legend recorded in the *Samoha Tantra,* Nila-Saraswati or Ugratara was born in a lake like Gola on the western side of Mount Meru. This name Gola is probably to be connected with *kul, kol* the common word for lake to the west and north of the Tien-Shan in the pure Mongolian zone". The *Ugratara* image at Mahisi has two images of Ekajata and Nila-Saraswati on either side. This image at Mahisi is not as mentioned by Dr. Benoytosh Bhattacharya. "The worshipper should conceive himself as (*Mahacina-Tara*) who stands in the *Pratyalidha* attitude, and awe-inspiring with a garland of heads hanging from the neck. She is short and has a protruding belly, and her looks are terrible. Her complexion is like that of the blue lotus, and she is three-eyed, one-faced, celestial and laughs horribly. She is in an intensely pleasant mood, stands on a corpse, is decked in ornaments of snakes, has red and round eyes, wears the garments of tiger-skin round her loins, is in youthful bloom, is endowed with the five suspicious symbols and has a protruding tongue. She is most terrible, appears fierce, with bare canine fangs, carries the sword and the *kartri* in the two right hands and the *uptals* and the *kapala* in the two left. Her *jatamukuta* of one coil is brown and fiery and bears the image of Aksobhya within it". ** The image at Mahisi appears to be that of Khadirvani Tara.

The village has two Middle schools including one girls' school, one High school and one Sanskrit High school. It has also a post office and a drama *bhawan* which has been constructed by the

* (i) Dr. Benoytosh Bhattacharya : *An Introduction to Buddhist Esoterism,* p. 155.

(ii) Dr. Benoytosh Bhattacharya : *Indian Buddhist Iconography*, pp. 248-49.

** Dr. Benoytosh Bhattacharya : *The Indian Buddhist Iconography,* pp. 189—191.

villagers. It has three libraries, namely, Mandan *Pustakalaya*, Saraswati *Pustakalaya* and *Bishwa Bandhu Pustakalaya*, a State dispensary of six indoor beds maintained by Government, one *dharamshala*, one Veterinary dispensary and some small shops.

The Governor of Bihar had visited Mahisi in 1963 and a move has been sponsored by him to found a suitable memorial to Mandan Mishra at the village. Before anything is done the road from Bangaon to Mahisi has to be made an all-weather road.

Murliganj town.—Regarding Murliganj J. Byrne in the old *Gazetteer of Bhagalpur* (1911) mentions:—

> "Thana Murliganj is about 13 miles to the east of Madhipura. It is the terminus of the District Board road from Madhipura to Murliganj, and Murliganj is situated on the right bank of the river Daus which is now virtually the main Kosi. The place was once an important centre of trade; some Marwaris who have their headquarters at Azimgunj (Murshidabad) and in district Shahabad carry on brisk trade in paddy, linseed, oilseed, *ghee*, cotton, coarse saltpetre, etc., which they export to Calcutta, Sahebgunge, Murshidabad and other places, in country boats down the river Kosi and the Ganges. They import cloth, liverpoolsalt, spices, sugar, iron and fine rice from Calcutta and other places. For the last few years the trade of the village has considerably declined owing to the flowing of a channel of the Kosi right into the village. The village appertains to the Sonbersa Raj. Population 3,934 souls."*

Since Byrne wrote Murliganj has had a lot of changes.

Murliganj has been declared to be a town according to 1961 census. According to the previous census rules a town was a place with a Municipality, Notified Area Committee or Cantonment or a place which had been declared a town. A town according to 1961 census is any place with a population of more than 5,000 persons, with density of more than 1,000 persons per square mile and if at least 75 per cent of adult male population is engaged in non-agricultural population. Murliganj fulfils the above conditions of being a town. Murliganj is bounded by Benga river on the north, village Panchgachia on the south and village Kashipur and Benga river towards the east and west respectively. Murliganj has a railway station on the North Eastern Railway. According to 1961 census the population is 9,848, i.e., 5,229 males and 4,619 females. The total area of the town is 4.94 square miles. It is a place of commercial and trade importance. Bamboo and jute are exported from here to Patna, Purnea, Siliguri, Sahebganj and Calcutta. The town has about 15 wholesale dealers,

* Extract from the old *Gazetteer of Bhagalpur*, by J. Byrne (p. 169).

45 retail-sale dealers and about 25 shops to sell the articles. It has a police-station, a Notified Area Committee a District Board Dak Bungalow and it is the headquarters of Murliganj Development Block. There is a branch of State Bank of India. The town has a post office, two libraries, one recreation club and one cinema house.

The town is inhabited by Hindu and Muhammadan communities. The Hindu community consists of about twenty castes. The Marwaris and Banias form the largest majority in the town. The number of Rajputs, Bhumihars, Kayasthas and Kurmis is not so high. As regards other castes, viz., Dhanuk, Dhobi, Kahar, Pasi, Dusadh, Chamar, Goala, etc., it may be mentioned that they are also in majority. Most of them are employed as labourers. The Muhammadan community is in a minority from population point of view.

Though there are seven Primary schools, two Middle schools including girls, one High school, viz., Baldeo Lakshmi High School, yet the percentage of students reading from Murliganj town is comparatively very small. Again it may be mentioned that the area is mostly occupied with business class of people. The guardians are not so enthusiastic to give adequate education to their children.

Regarding trade and commerce it may be mentioned that about 20 per cent of the population are engaged in trade and commerce. The chief commercial classes are Agarwals, Marwaris and Banias. Marwaris are well known and form an enterprising commercial community. They have played an important role in enhancing the importance of trade and commerce.

From the communication point of view the town is backward. About two miles of *pucca* and 2½ miles of *kutcha* roads are maintained by the Notified Area Committee. The Notified Area Committee has not been able to provide a good source of water-supply to the people of the town. The town has about 65 tube-wells which is the only source of water-supply. There is a telephone exchange having about 20 connections.

From medical and public health point of view also the town is backward. It has a State dispensary where six indoor beds have been provided. There are three Allopathic, seven Homoeopathic and two *Ayurvedic* practitioners in the town which are quite insufficient for a population of about 9,848. There is no sewerage system within the town and there is a general lack of sense of sanitation. Medical and public health measures are rather poor. It is a pity that a place with some importance for trade and commerce should have such want of basic amenities like proper sanitation.

Nirmali.—Nirmali is situated on the north-east corner of Saharsa district and on the border of Darbhanga district. The eastern portion of the town has a ring *bundh* which has protected the town from falling within the area of the two Kosi embankments.

It is a small town in Supaul subdivision with an area of 2.04 square miles. According to the census of 1961 the total population of the town is 5,423 (2,843 males and 2,580 females). A Union Committee was established here as far back as in 1919 which continued to function till it was replaced by the Notified Area Committee on 4th April, 1962. The town has four wards and the number of households is 780 only. The details about the Notified Area Committee have been given in the Chapter Local Self-Government.

There is no *pucca* road or *pucca* drain in the town. However, the Notified Area Committee maintains some *kutcha* roads measuring about 18,184 feet. But the condition of these roads is very unsatisfactory and during the rains the roads are water-logged. It is a pity that an important town should have such wretched roads.

This place was connected with Pratapganj—a distance of 24 miles, by rail. Prior to 1904 a railway line ran from Pratapganj up to Kanwa Ghat on the Kosi river from where passengers used to cross Anchra Ghat on the opposite side of Purnea by boats. It was also connected with Pratapganj by road and from Pratapganj other roads linked Nirmali with almost all the important places of this district*. But due to Kosi floods the railway line was dismantled and the road linking Nirmali with Pratapganj was also washed away. The town is almost isolated from the district.

A branch line of North Eastern Railway now connects Sakri Railway Station with Nirmali. This rail route is also sometimes breached due to floods of the river Bhuthi Balan. The western Kosi embankment passing by the side of this town links this place with Saharsa *via* Birpur. There is no bus service on this route. However, a few taxies (three or four) are available at Nirmali to take the passengers to Raj Biraj, Hanuman Nagar and Kanchanpara (in Nepal) and Birpur (in Saharsa district). Nirmali is connected with some parts of Nepal because of the embankment. A road from Darbhanga runs up to Jhangharpur which is at a distance of about 21 miles from this town.

The bad communications affect the trade and commerce of the town. This problem has been discussed in the text on Banking, Trade and Commerce. However, it may be mentioned that due to lack of transport facilities the producers have to sell their commodities locally at a very cheap rate. Nirmali town is important particularly for the trade of jute, rice and linseed. Jute is extensively grown in this area and rice is imported mostly from Nepal side. The trade is mostly in the hands of the Marwaris.

There is a police-station at Nirmali, the area of which is nearly co-extensive with the area of Nirmali Anchal. The police-station was notified as early as in 1906. An Inspector of Police is in charge

* *Final Report on the Survey and Settlement Operations in the Bhagalpur* District, 1902—1910 by Murphy, pp. 7-8.

of the *thana*. There are two outposts—one at Kunauli and the other at Bhaptiahi. The average cognizable crime reported to the police-station per year is 52.

There is also a branch Post Office which is under the Head Post Office, Darbhanga. There is also a Telephone Exchange which is connected to Darbhanga and twenty-two connections are operating in this town.

Nirmali has a Middle school for girls and a High school for boys. The merchants have liberally contributed.

There is a Divisional Office of the Kosi Project administration functioning here since 1954 under an Executive Engineer. There is also a Rehabilitation Office of the Kosi Project Department. An Inspection Bungalow is also maintained here by this department.

There is a *dharamsala* consisting of about 20 rooms. But some of the rooms have been occupied by the Government employees and a few rooms, though vacant, are not allowed to be occupied by the travellers.

With the present communications Nirmali has a closer connection with the Darbhanga district than the places in Saharsa district. The merchants of Nirmali have more trade relations with their counter parts in Darbhanga district and students prefer to go to Darbhanga for higher education.

Panchgachia.—A village on the District Board road from Bhaptiahi to Bhuli about 18 miles to the west of Madhepura town and the railway station of the same name. Previously it was under Bangaon police-station but since the creation of the district it is within Saharsa police-station. According to 1951 census the population is 2,711 souls (1,310 males and 1,401 females). The population figures of the villages according to 1961 census are not yet published.

The last *District Gazetteer of Bhagalpur,* 1911 by J. Byrne, mentions as follows:—*

> "Babu Priabarat Narain Singh of Panchgachia is the principal proprietor of the estate, owning about 12½ annas share of it, while Babus Chummun Singh, Kedar Narain Singh and Bacha Singh of Panchgachia own the remaining 3½ annas in equal shares. The family traces its origin from Raja Vikramaditta the great of Ujjaini, and belongs to the Gandhwaria of the Pramara branch of the Rajputs. It is said that one of Vikramaditta's descendants, Prithi Raj Singh, migrated from Dhar in Malwa and settled down at Garh Gandhwar in Tirhoot. From Garh Gandhwar his descendants are known as Gandhwaria Rajputs. Pakhesh Singh, one of the

* Extract from the old *District Gazetteer of Bhagalpur* (p. 170).

descendants of Prithi Raj Singh left Garh Gandhwar to his brother Lakhesh Singh and migrated to Naprauti in North Bhagalpur. The descendants of Lakhesh Singh acquired extensive territories in Tirhoot and North Bhagalpur. One of them, namely, Keshri Singh, is said to have obtained the *sanad* and title of Raja from the Emperor of Delhi. It is said that the Raja of Mithila, a predecessor of the present Maharaja of Darbhanga, refused to recognise the Rajship conferred upon Keshri Singh and hence it is said there was a sanguinary battle between the parties. At last they came to terms and the Tiljuga river was fixed as the boundary between the dominions of the Gandhwarias and those of the Mithila Raj.

"These Gandhwarias are scattered over all Tirhoot and North Bhagalpur. The families of Sonbarsa, Shahpur, Durgapur, Baranasi, Sukhpur, Barail, Parsarma, Judia, Mangunsi, Keepsia, Dhabouli, etc., all belong to it.

"Sardar Singh, one of the descendants of Lakhesh Singh, settled down in the vicinity of Panchgachia, and was the ancestor of the present *zamindar* Babu Priyabarat Narain Singh, obtained the title of Raja Bahadur for his good services at the famine of 1291 F.S. He incurred heavy debts for his large acts of charity and died leaving a minor son, namely, Babu Priyabarat Narain Singh. The management of his share in the estate was taken up by the court of wards."

The village has continued to be a centre for music. The village has produced a few musicians of great repute. There is a music school established in 1951. The villagers are very fond of *kirtan*.

The village has a Post Office, a State dispensary of six indoor beds, a Veterinary dispensary, three co-operative societies, viz., *Telghani* Co-operative Society, Co-operative Credit Society and *Targur* Co-operative Society and a permanent market.

The village has a number of educational institutions. The village has a High school, viz., Priyabarat High School established in 1916. It has 735 students and twenty teachers (1963). Besides, there are four Lower Primary schools, two Middle schools including one girls' school and one Sanskrit High school. The village has two recreation clubs and two libraries.

As regards communication it may be noted that a link road from Saharsa to Supaul connects the Panchgachia Railway Station. From Panchgachia Railway Station to the village there is no *pucca* road and during rainy season it is difficult to reach in the village. Bullock-cart is the only source of conveyance in the village.

The main occupation of the people of the village is cultivation, business and service. Cultivators produce mainly paddy, maize and jute. Jute is sent to Nirmali or Supaul.

The village has *gram panchayat*. A *mela* is held in the village on the occasion of Durga Puja and Kali Puja. There are five Hindu temples, two *thakurbaris* and one mosque. The *zamindars* of the village were quite enlightened and encouraged music, sports, *shikar*, etc. The abolition of the *zamindari* had affected the progress of this village but now some development is again being recorded because of the activities of the Block Officer.

Sadar subdivision.—The district of Saharsa was a part of Bhagalpur district till March, 1954. Prior to that it had only two subdivisions, viz., Madhepura and Supaul. Madhepura and Supaul subdivisions were given the status of a sub-district with an Additional District Magistrate at Saharsa from the 1st June, 1944. The sub-district functioned till March, 1951. On the 1st April, 1954, Saharsa was given the status of a full-fledged district with three subdivisions, i.e., Saharsa Sadar, Madhepura and Supaul. Saharsa Sadar subdivision was carved out of the previous Madhepura subdivision. Madhepura subdivision had three revenue *thanas*, i.e., Bangaon, Kisanganj and Madhepura. Bangaon revenue *thana* was removed entirely in Sadar subdivision.

The Sadar subdivision of Saharsa has a total area of 475 square miles. It has 348 villages and one town, namely, Saharsa town.

The total population of the subdivision according to 1961 census is—

	Total population.	Males.	Females.	Rural.	Urban.
1961	417,881	213,037	204,844	403,803	14,803

The total urban population forms 3.5 per cent of the total population. There are 56,177 households.

The Subdivisional Officer, Sadar is the head of the civil administration of the Sadar subdivision and he is directly under Magistrate. The headquarters of Sadar subdivision is located at Saharsa which is also the district headquarters. The Sadar Subdivisional Officer had the following gazetted officers under him on the 31st March, 1963:—

(1) Deputy Collector incharge Land Reforms and Development—1, (2) Deputy Collector (Second Officer)—1, (3) Sub-Deputy Collector—1, (4) *Anchal Adhivasis-cum*-Block Development Officers—5.

There are five police-stations, namely, Saharsa, Bangaon, Nowhatta, Sonbarsa and Sourbazar. Saharsa is within Saharsa Notified Area Committee. Bangaon, Sonbarsa and Sourbazar are connected

with Saharsa town by fair-weather metalled roads. The thana headquarters of Nowhatta is not connected with Saharsa by a metalled road.

The Sadar subdivision has got five *Anchals,* namely, Katra, Nowhatta, Sonbarsa, Sourbazar and Mahisi. The *Anchal* is a unit for revenue administration and for development work. Each *Anchal* has been placed under a gazetted officer who is called Block Development Officer-*cum-Anchal Adhikari.* He is normally of the rank of a Deputy Collector or a Sub-Deputy Collector.

Gram Panchayat.—The Act was put into operation in Sadar subdivision from 1948. *Gram panchayat* is entrusted with multifarious powers and functions. It undertakes planning and construction of roads, wells and other works necessary for the villages. At present (1963) there are 117 *gram panchayats* in Sadar subdivision.

Incidence of crime.—The incidence in Sadar subdivision is high. The Deputy Superintendent of Police, Madhepura, controls the areas covered by Sadar subdivision. He is assisted by several Inspectors and Sub-Inspectors of Police. The subdivision has three Inspectors of Police at Sadar, Sonbarsa and Nowhatta and five Sub-Inspectors at Sadar, Nowhatta, Mahisi, Sonbarsa and Sourbazar.

Election Office.—The Subdivisional Officer is the Subdivisional Election Officer and for day-to-day work he is assisted by the Second Officer. The Subdivisional Officer is the Electoral Registration Officer and Returning Officer.

There are altogether two Assembly Constituencies, namely, Saharsa and Sonbarsa and one Parliamentary Constituency, namely, Saharsa Parliamentary Constituency.

Co-operative Department.—The Circle Office, Saharsa is under the control of the Assistant Registrar, Co-operative Societies and its divisional head is the Deputy Registrar, Co-operative Societies, Bhagalpur Division, Bhagalpur. There is one Co-operative Inspector and one local Auditor posted by the department in each Community Development Block. There are 193 Co-operative Societies and the total number of membership is 14,132.

Jail Department.—With the creation of Saharsa district a subsidiary jail at Saharsa started functioning with effect from 1st April 1954. From 1st April 1963 the Saharsa Subsidiary Jail has been upgraded to the status of a District Jail. The District Jail at Saharsa at present is functioning under the Civil Surgeon who is the part-time Superintendent of the Jail. In addition to that, there are one Jailor, two Assistant Jailors, one Medical Officer, six Head Warders, twenty-five Warders. The sanctioned capacity is 44, i.e., 30 males and 14 females. Though the strength is 44, but it has usually a large population of prisoners. There is no industry in the jail.

Stamps.—There is one Treasury Office at Saharsa in charge of the Second Officer and under the supervision of the Subdivisional Officer. The revenue from the sale of stamps is an important source of income to the State Government.

The statement below supplied by Saharsa Treasury Office, will show the receipts from the sale of stamps:—

Year.		Non-judicial in rupees.	Judicial in rupees.
1958-59	..	84,439	4,139
1959-60	..	1,20,854	52,314
1960-61	..	1,67,119	51,912
1961-62	..	1,63,421	64,312

General.—There are four railway stations within the jurisdiction of Sadar subdivision, namely, Sonbarsa, Saharsa, Panchgachia and Baijnathpur. There is no important trade centre in Sadar subdivision. There are one Circuit House and Inspection Bungalow in Saharsa town. There are Inspection Bungalows at Sourbazar, Panchgachia, Nowhatta, Bangaon and Sonbarsa. Saharsa is connected with Supaul and Madhepura by metalled roads but during rainy season the road communication is disrupted. Important places in Sadar subdivision have been covered separately.

Saharsa Town.—Saharsa is the headquarters of the district. It has an area of 5.43 square miles and the total population is 14,803, i.e., 8,531 males and 6,272 females according to 1961 census. The town has three wards with 1,700 number of occupied houses.

Prior to 1944 Saharsa was a small village only full of *kans* and *pater* jungles. The village was eclipsed by the neighbouring Bangaon which was a more flourishing village. There were two markets, namely, Bariahi located at about four miles west of the town and Baijnathpur located at about five miles east of the town. The area was full of wild life and people moved in groups while visiting markets. The incidence of crime was also very high. Saharsa had a railway station with very little traffic. The area being comparatively free from Kosi depredations and offering a wide stretch of plain land which could be developed Saharsa was selected as the headquarters of the sub-district in 1943. This encouraged the building of a few *pucca* houses and the siting of a market. The railway station was also remodelled. Steps were taken to improve the communications. The subsequent fact of Saharsa being made into a district and Saharsa town as the district headquarters assured the future of Saharsa town and lawyers, doctors, tradesmen, etc., got attracted. When the Editor of this *District Gazetteer* visited Saharsa in 1954 there was a length of only a mile and half of metalled road in the town. The District Magistrate used to live in the District Board Bungalow and a large

number of Government buildings and Court offices were under construction. Prior to that the Additional District Magistrate used to live in a bungalow a few yards off the railway station and the Court offices were adjacent to his bungalow. These houses now accommodate the Settlement office. There was, of course, great change to what the Editor saw when he visited Saharsa in 1949.

Now the town has somewhat developed but the factor behind the development is that Saharsa is the district headquarters. A number of Government offices are located in the town. They include the offices of the District Magistrate, Executive Engineer, P. W. D., Executive Engineer, Unified Minor Irrigation, Assistant Registrar, Co-operative Societies, Commercial Tax Superintendent, Labour Officer, Employment Exchange, Branch Office of Life Insurance Co-operatives, S. D. O., Electricity, Superintendent of Police, Deputy Director of Agriculture and State Bank Branch, etc. The town has a District Jail and a police line.

The town is connected indifferently by rail, roads and airways. It has a railway station of the same name. The communication links with the outlying parts of the district are extremely poor. Even the road traffic with Supaul and Madhepura is affected in the rainy season. The railway link depends on the branch line from Mansi on Katihar line and Mansi is open to erosion. There are very few trains which are always very slow-moving and are notorious for missing connections at Mansi. A railway journey from Saharsa to Bhagalpur the divisional headquarters takes about 10 to 12 hours although the distance is much less than 100 miles. Both goods and passenger traffic suffer.

Saharsa town has a poor market and as a trade centre has very little importance in the district. Even most of the ordinary consumers' goods are difficult to procure. It is, however, a happy place for the medical practitioners who pick up a very good practice very easily. There is now very little of intellectual or cultural atmosphere although colleges and schools are there. There is very little of public life. Readership is very limited. The town is more primitive so far communications are concerned than many of the subdivisions in other Bihar district. Bullock-carts, rickshaws and cycles form the main conveyances besides a very few private cars.

The number of cycles, rickshaws and carts registered in the town from 1960-61 to 1962-63 is as follows:—

		No. of cycles.	No. of rickshaws.	No. of carts.
1960-61	..	180	127	169
1961-62	..	150	129	261
1962-63	..	139	89	333

The Saharsa Notified Area Committee has at present 1½ miles of metalled road and two miles of *kutcha* road.

Some street lighting is done. Arrangement for water-supply appears inadequate. The Committee has provided only 53 hand pumps which supply water. Disposal of garbage and night-soil is done on unsatisfactory primitive methods and the service is very inadequate.

There are seven Primary schools and two Middle schools. Besides, the town has a Degree college with about 800 students, a Multipurpose zilla school with 425 students, a Government girls' High school with 86 students, Manohar Middle School, an industrial school, an agricultural training school and a mission school of Middle standard with 200 students.

The town has got a small vegetable market but sufficient for the town. It is annually leased out by the Circle Officer of Kahara. There is also a small grain market near the vegetable market. Fish and meat are available. Fish and meat are still cheap in comparison to the price at the other flourishing district headquarters.

The town is growing in a rather lop-sided manner and *pucca* houses are being built in slum areas. There have been very little restrictions from the Notified Area Committee or the State Government and unimaginative urbanisation is growing up.

Regarding accommodation, the town has a Circuit House, an Inspection Bungalow and one *dharmshala* which do not seem to be adequate for a district headquarters. There are about ten cheap roadside eating houses and thirty tea and betel shops. The cheap hotels offer temporary accommodation. The standard is primitive.

The town has a Sadar hospital started in 1945. Details of the hospital will be found in the text on Medical and Public Health Services. The following are the statistics of patients for 1960-61 and 1961-62:—

Year.		Outdoor patient treatment.	Indoor patient treatment.
1960-61	..	1,52,321	45,321
1961-62	..	1,49,492	47,214

The town has a Post Office. It is under the administrative control of the Superintendent of Post Offices at Purnea. On an investigation from Saharsa Post Office, it was ascertained that on the average 3,142 money orders are received every month for the average amount of Rs. 1,43,241. The average number of money orders sent every month comes to 2,412 with the amount of Rs. 1,51,341. There is a telephone exchange at Saharsa since 1957 with 53 local connections including officials.

The town has a District Central Library and an institution, namely, *Natya Parishad*. There is one Circuit House, two recreation clubs, viz., officers' club and a club for the employees of the Life Insurance Corporation. The standard of most of the institutions is very poor.

Shahpur Chaumukh.—This village in *thana* Kishanganj is about 14 miles from Madhepura town to the south-east. It is on the District Board road from Madhepura to Lattipur. At Lahund (Lohur), which is contiguous to Shahpur, a little to the south, there is a shrine of "Lakshmi Narayan" which consists of a black stone with carved statutes of Mahadeo with serpent, Kalika Devi with four hands and a circle of human heads round her neck and some other Hindu gods and goddesses. This shrine, which is under an ancient banian tree is held in great reverence by the Hindus of the sorrounding villages.

The population of this village according to 1961 census (provisional) is 4,112 with an area of 2,096 acres and 512 occupied houses.

This village has a High school, a Middle school, two Upper Primary schools, a library, a Post Office, a mosque, two *thakurbaris*, a *Gram Panchayat*, a multi-purpose co-operative society, a health centre and a veterinary centre.

There are about five shops of miscellaneous goods in the village. *Melas* are held here on the occasions of Dasehra, Kali Puja and Muharram.

Simrahi.—This is a village in Pratapganj police-station (Supaul subdivision) situated at a distance of 26 miles north-east of Supaul and 28 miles north-east of Madhepura. This village is connected with Supaul and Madhepura by metalled roads. The village is mostly populated by the Goalas and Banias.

The population of this village according to 1951 census is 2,445 with an area of 1,069 acres and 489 houses.

It is a place of commercial importance. Its trade consists of almost entirely of Nepal wood, jute, paddy, oilseed and linseed which are brought from parts of Supaul subdivision and from Nepal. A big *hat* is held twice a week. The *hat* has special importance being on the border of Nepal. It has a Post Office, an Inspection Bungalow, one High school, two Middle schools, one anti-malaria centre, one veterinary centre and one library. The village has a *gram panchayat* and one multi-purpose co-operative society.

Singheshwar.—Singeshwhar, a village in Madhepura subdivision, is situated 18 miles north-east of Saharsa town and 5 miles north of Madhepura town. The village is the headquarters of a police-station of the same name. It is also the headquarters of Singheshwar Block. The finalised villagewise figures according to 1961 census have not

yet been published. The population of this village is near about 1,000. The area is 311 acres and there are 179 occupied houses according to the papers at Singheshwar Block.

The village is famous for a Shiva temple. According to the legend, the Shiva *lingam* at the Singheshwarsthan temple was established by Sringa Rishi. It was Sringa Rishi who had performed the *Putresthi Yagna* for King Dasarath and later was blessed with four sons. The impact of this legend is seen in a regular visit of a large number of barren women for offering *puja* here. The present temple over the ancient *lingam* was constructed about 200 years ago by Hari Charan Choudhury, a merchant. The temple is brick built and has no particular architectural beauty.

There was a title suit by the public against the Pandas of the temple under section 92 of the Civil Procedure Code. The public challenged the claim of the Pandas that the temple was a private property. According to the Pandas, two of their ancestors, Anant Thakur and his brother Mahesh Thakur had come to this place for a bath in the Kosi river. The story is that Anant Thakur dreamt that Lord Shiva directed him to stay on at this place and waking up he saw the *lingam*. Anant Thakur began to worship the *lingam* and allowed the people to worship also freely. The Pandas claim that they are the lineal descendants of Anant Thakur and were the hereditary *shevaits* of the deity. They claim that the offerings in the temple exclusively belong to them and they had been all along defraying the expenses for the maintenance of the temple.

The public contended that the *lingam* is very ancient and had an older temple built on it which had toppled down and the present temple was built by Hari Charan Choudhury. For the public *Baraha Puran* was depended on. Singheshwar was mentioned in *Baraha Puran* and this name came to be known as Singheshwar.

The matter was decided by the District Judge of Bhagalpur in title suit no. 3 of 1937. The judgment was given in 1945 and the temple was declared to be a public institution and not the private property of the Pandas. The Judge had referred to a judgment of the Judicial Committee of the Privy Council which arose out of suit no. 35 of 1910. In that case the Pandas had never claimed to be the proprietor of the temple but had only described themselves as *shevaits*. The Judge also referred with an admitted fact that there are various constructions made by the public from time to time within the temple compound showing that it was a public institution. For example, one Raghubir Das had built the temple of Ram-Janki within the compound and used to live there. There is also a *samadhi* of another saint of Bir Bharti. The temple was never closed even when there was a death in the family of the Pandas.

The Darbhanga Raj had gifted some villages for the maintenance of the deity. According to the order of the District Judge a trust was created to manage the temple. The Trust Committee was

formed with five members, namely, Subdivisional Officer of Madhepura as the Chairman and four members nominated by the public of the neighbouring villages of Singheshwarsthan. A panel of *pujaris* was formed by the Committee and it was decided that surplus income from the temple and other properties after defraying all the expenses of *ragbhog*—ceremonial functions, repair of buildings and keeping one-third as reserve fund will be distributed among the Pandas according to their share as the Judge found.* Since 1957 the temple has been brought under the control of the State Government. The Religious Trust Department of the State of Bihar has now formed a Committee to control the temple as well as the cattle fair there and the number of the members of the Committee had been increased to 12.

The Committee consists of the following members:—

President.

(1) Subdivisional Officer, Madhepura.

Members.

(2) Block Development Officer, Singheshwar.

(3) *Mukhiya* of Singheshwar *Gram Panchayat.*

(4) The Member of the Legislative Assembly of Singheshwar Constituency.

Besides, one member is nominated by the Religious Board, one member is elected from among the 14 families of Pandas, and six more members from non-official side are nominated by the Subdivisional Officer, Madhepura.

The table below supplied by the Singheshwar Trust, indicates the average number of pilgrims that visit per year:—

	Total number of pilgrims.
1960	2,52,432
1961	2,82,321
1962	3,10,514

The amenities for a place visited by lakhs of pilgrims are poor. There is a *dharmshala* in the area which accommodates only about 100 persons. At the time of the *mela* some tents and sheds are provided by Government. The floating population of thousands every day are in great difficulties for their stay and bullock-carts in which many come to serve as their temporary housing. Special sanitary precautions are taken at the time of the fair to prevent the outbreak of an epidemic and arrangements for the supply and distribution of good

* Source.—Extract from the Judgment, dated 25th September 1948, Title Suit no. 8 of 1937. (In the Court of the Additional District Judge, Bhagalpur, pp. 76—98.).

water are made. There is a water tower maintained by the Public Health Engineering Department, Saharsa, which supplies water in the *mela* area. Electricity has been given to Singheshwar village and the temple. Special buses and trains from Saharsa, Madhepura and Supaul ply during *mela* season. People from within and outside the district visit the *mela* and even people from Nepal also come to worship Lord Shiva. The accommodation provided by Government and the *Mela* Committee are quite inadequate.

Sanitary and conservancy become great problem during *mela* time. The wells in the village and in the neighbourhood are all disinfected and a number of extra temporary tube-wells are sunk. Temporary borehole latrines and urinals are put up. The bad habit of promiscuous defection by the pilgrims and leaving used up earthen cooking utensils, etc., make the task of the conservancy staff all the more difficult. Conservancy staff is drafted from Madhepura and Murliganj towns. The *mela* is utilised by the Public Relations Department for showing educative films and holding other demonstrations. The *mela* ground accommodates a large temporary *bazar* of consumers' goods, foodstuff, etc.

On the occasion of Shivaratri when thousands congregate for offering oblations to the *lingam*, a large cattle fair is held. The cattle fair continues for about 15 days and the turnover of the cattle is said to be numerically second only to that of *Hariharkhetra mela* at Sonepur in Saran district.

The statistical figures of livestock brought for sale at the fair as supplied by Singheshwar Trust, from 1955-56 to 1962-63 are given below:—

Year.	Horse and ponies.	Elephants.	Cows	Bullock and calves.	Buffaloes.
1	2	3	4	5	6
1955-56	1,306	1,337	5,437	25,437	2,481
1956-57	2,404	1,167	4,321	22,437	2,312
1957-58	3,102	939	3,425	20,521	3,402
1958-59 .. .	3,812	732	2,689	30,549	3,304
1959-60	2,914	702	2,319	32,318	3,514
1960-61	1,013	809	1,329	32,432	2,121
1961-62	1,212	569	1,210	33,514	1,123
1962-63	1,914	402	1,913	30,312	1,321

Singheshwar has three Primary schools, two Middle schools, and one High school. The High school was started in 1956. There is a Sanskrit High school established in 1954. The village has a *gram panchayat*. a library, a Post Office, a police-station and a block office under the administrative control of a Block Development Officer.

The table below supplied by Singheshwar Temple Trust Office, Singheshwar gives the income and expenditure of the temple from 1957-58 *to* 1962-63.

Income (in rupees).

Major items.	1957-58.	1958-59.	1959-60.	1960-61.	1961-62.	1962-63.
1	2	3	4	5	6	7
1. Offerings on the deity.	52,469.06	49,363.13	50,278.28	65,313.31	67,219.47	69,103.21
2. *Hats* and *Mela*.	34,149.63	31,211.24	32,112.19	31,212.43	32,110.51	33,201.59
3. Government grant for sanitation.	1,120.00	1,120.00	1,120.00	1,150.00	1,150.00	1,150.00
4. Price of gold and silver.	619.56	549.18	558.63	617.34	721.09	810.29
5. Miscellaneous.	10,268.25	8,876.64	11,448.14	9,429.48	8,569.31	9,327.31
Total ..	98,626.50	91,120.19	95,517.24	1,07,722.56	1,09,770.38	1,13,592.40

Expenditure (in rupees).

Major items.	1957-58.	1958-59.	1959-60.	1960-61.	1961-62.	1962-63.
1	2	3	4	5	6	7
1. Guest ..	2,240.84	2,231.22	2,142.81	2,351.72	3,157.42	3,047.34
2. *Mela* expenses	13,412.92	15,822.77	11,472.00	13,814.81	14,318.21	15,121.40
3. Construction work	8,467.12	6,332.14	5,933.51	4,321.41	5,432.51	5,328.57
4. Pay of staff of Trust.	9,802.62	9,802.62	9,802.62	9,802.62	9,802.62	9,802.62
5. *Rag Bhog* ..	3,771.97	3,931.89	3,722.72	3,549.41	3,572.51	3,671.41
6. Special *Pujas* ..	3,231.90	2,941.80	2,843.77	2,761.52	2,973.61	3,102.11
7. Maintenance of Sanskrit school.	3,886.77	3,886.77	3,886.77	3,886.77	3,886.77	3,[illegible]6.77
8. Share of Pandas	17,517.21	16,314.19	16,319.20	23,880.00	21,085.00	22,564.00
9. Reserve fund	9,312.10	8,319.29	8,429.10	11,940.00	10,542.00	11,[illegible].00
10. Taxes ..	6,019.50	6,019.50	6,019.50	6,019.50	6,020.60	6,019.50
11. Miscellaneous ..	20,963.55	21,517.91	30,945.24	25,394.80	28,079.66	[illegible]
Total ..	98,626.50	91,120.19	95,517.24	1,07,722.56	1,09,770.11	1,1[illegible].35

Srinagar.—This village is in Singheshwar police-station at a distance of about 6 miles to the north-west of Madhepura town. There are the remains of two forts in the village. The legend is that one Raja Sri Deva used to live in the village. There are two large tanks on the west and south-west of the fort ruins at Srinagar, one of them is called Harsar and the other is called Gupa. The temple has a Shiva *linga* and stone pillars with an inscription. The area is apparently ancient.

Supaul subdivision.—A subdivision with Supaul as headquarters was created in November, 1870. It has a total area of 916 square miles. It has 557 villages and three towns, namely, Supaul, Nirmali and Birpur according to 1961 census. According to 1951 census this subdivision had no towns.

The total population of the subdivision according to the two last censuses are—

Years.		Total population.	Males.	Females.
1951	..	4,31,547	2,20,269	2,11,278
1961	..	6,63,339	3,40,236	3,23,103

Out of the total population there are 3,40,236 males and 3,26,103 females. There are 101,906 households.

The Subdivisional Officer who is in charge of the subdivision is directly under the administrative control of the District Magistrate. He is normally a member of the Bihar Civil Service or the Indian Administrative Service. The Subdivisional Officer is assisted by two Sub-Deputy Collectors. There is a Deputy Collector in charge of Land Reforms and Revenue works.

The Subdivisional Officer is responsible for the execution of all planning schemes in the subdivision. He is responsible for maintaining law and order and the smooth running of administration at the subdivisional level.

The Subdivisional Officer of Supaul had the following gazetted officers under him on the 31st March, 1963:—

(1) Deputy Collector in charge of Land Reforms and Development—1.

(2) Sub-Deputy Collectors—2.

(3) *Anchal Adhikari-cum*-Block Development Officers—9.

(4) Compensation Officers—3

There are seven police-stations, namely, Supaul, Pratapganj, Bhimnagar, Tribeniganj, Chhattapur, Kishanpur and Nirmali. The subdivision has got nine *Anchals-cum*-Development Blocks, namely, Supaul, Pipra, Raghopur, Kishanpur, Tribeniganj, Chhattapur,

Marauna, Nirmali and Basantpur. There are two Notified Area Committees in Supaul and Nirmali established in 1959 and 1962 respectively. The Subdivisional Officer is the Chairman of both the Notified Area Committees.

Gram Panchayat.—The *gram panchayat* plays an important role in the general administration of the subdivision. The Act was put into operation in Supaul subdivision in 1948. At present (1963) there are 163 official *Gram Panchayats* in Supaul subdivision. Details of the working of the *Gram Panchayats* will be found in the text on 'Local Self-Government'.

Incidence of crime.—The incidence of crime is quite high. The number of petty crimes such as thefts and burglaries have increased considerably during the post-war years because of very high prices. Floods and droughts have impoverished the people and many of them have taken to anti-social activities. From 1959 there have been on the average 15 dacoities every year.

There is one Deputy Superintendent of Police at Supaul who is the administrative head of the Police Department of Supaul subdivision. He is assisted by several Inspectors and Sub-Inspectors of Police. The subdivision has five Inspectors of Police at Supaul, Pratapganj, Chhattapur, Tribeniganj and Nirmali and five Sub-Inspectors at Supaul, Kishanpur, Pratapganj, Karjoni and Kanhauli. It has six outposts under various police-stations. They are at Kanhauli (Nirmali police-station), Bhaptiahi (Nirmali police station), Bhimpur (Chhattapur police-station), Yadiah (Parsagarhi-Tribeniganj police-station), Bhimnagar (Bhimnagar police-station) and Karjoni (Pratapganj police-station). Detection of crime is difficult owing to the proximity of Nepal where the criminals run away inaccessibility of some areas in the rainy season, bad communications and lack of civic sense. Post-mortems are done only in Subdivisional Hospitals as a result of which many dead bodies become putrid and no proper post-mortem could be held.

Election Office.—The Subdivisional Officer is the Subdivisional Election Officer and for day-to-day work he is assisted by the Second Officer. The Subdivisional Officer is the Electoral Registration Officer and Returning Officer.

There are altogether four Assembly constituencies, namely, Tribeniganj, Raghopur, Supaul and Kishanpur.

Co-operative Department.—The Circle Office, Supaul is under the control of the Assistant Registrar, Co-operative Societies and its divisional head is the Deputy Registrar, Co-operative Societies, Bhagalpur Division, Bhagalpur. There is one Co-operative Inspector and one local Auditor posted by the department in each Community Development Block and the general area is looked after by the Central Co-operative Bank.

There are 331 Co-operative Societies and the total number of membership is about 23,000.

Jail Department.—The Medical Officer of Supaul Hospital is the administrative head of the Sub-Jail, Supaul. He is the part-time Superintendent of Jail. Under the Medical Officer there are one Assistant Jailor, one Head Warder and six Warders. The Assistant Jailor is under the direct control of the Inspector-General of Prisons, Bihar. The Sub-Jail of Supaul whose capacity is 41 (36 males and 5 females) but it has usually a larger population of prisoners. There is no industry in this Sub-Jail and only under-trial and short-term prisoners are kept in the Sub-Jail.

There is a sub-treasury at Supaul and the Second Officer is incharge. The Subdivisional Officer is the head of the Sub-Treasury Office.

The statement below supplied by Supaul Sub-Treasury Office, will show the receipts from the sale of stamps:—

Year.	Non-judicial in rupees.	Judicial in rupees.
1958-59	98,361	4,985
1959-60	1,25,954	55,616
1960-61	1,69,110	60,268
1961-62	1,66,889	67,897

General.—There are three railway stations within the jurisdiction of Supaul subdivision, namely, Parsarma, Supaul and Nirmali. The important trade centres are Nirmali and Supaul. Jute and rice are the main commodities of trade in both the places. Mostly jute is exported to Calcutta and Titagarh. Rice is exported to places in Santal Parganas, Ranchi, Patna, etc. There are six Inspection Bungalows at Supaul, Nirmali, Pipra, Raghopur, Tribeniganj and Pratapganj. Supaul is connected with Saharsa town and Madhepura by road but due to the want of some culverts and bridges bus services discontinue during the rainy season on the above routes. The normal communications with some important places like Tribeniganj, Pratapganj and Nirmali are disconnected by road during the rainy season. Nirmali falls beyond the two Kosi embankments where flood occurs almost every year and hence the communications are cut off in rainy season.

Important places in Supaul subdivision have been covered separately.

Supaul Town.—Supaul is situated by the Kosi embankment and is the administrative headquarters of Supaul subdivision. It is at a distance of 28 miles north from Saharsa town and has a railway station of the same name. It has an area of 8½ square miles and 2,531 occupied houses. The population is 17,460 consisting of 9,297 males and 8,163 females according to 1961 census.

Supaul town has been badly affected by Kosi flood during recent past. Due to the ravages of Kosi the headquarters of Supaul subdivision was shifted to Saharsa in the year 1939. The headquarters came back to Supaul in 1944 when Saharsa was declared a sub-district.

During 1934 and 1935 Supaul was severely affected by Kosi flood and the railway connection between Supaul and Parsarma was destroyed and the people had to go to Saharsa by boat up to Panchgachia and from Panchgachia, there was a rail connection up to Saharsa. There was a rail connection between Mansi to Darbhanga *via* Supaul, Bhaptiahi and Nirmali but due to ravages of Kosi in 1935 the railway line was dismantled.

A Union Committee was established in 1911 which continued to function till it was replaced by the Notified Area Committee in 1959. The area of the town has been divided into three wards and the number of households is 2.531. The total length of roads is 17 miles and two furlongs. Out of this about one mile of road is being metalled. The details about the functions of the Notified Area Committee have been given in the text on 'Local Self-Government'.

The Committee has installed 71 tube-wells. There are 377 private wells within the Notified Area but a large number of them dry up in summer months. It may be mentioned that a large number of wells were destroyed by Kosi floods. The soil is sandy and sinking of well is not always successful.

The expansion of the town has made the water problem more acute. In April, 1963, the Committee has moved the Government for a grant to work out a scheme of supply of piped water.

The town is connected by rail and road with Saharsa, the district headquarters. The main roads in the town are metalled. Bullock-carts and rickshaws are the main conveyances. There are a few private cars.

The town has one Degree college, two High schools including one for girls, two Middle schools including one for girls, ten Primary schools and one technical school. There are two recreation clubs and a cinema house. The clubs have small libraries and arrangements for indoor games.

The town has a Dak Bungalow, a Kosi Inspection Bungalow and two *dharmshalas*. There are also a number of cheap road side eating houses and tea shops which offer temporary accommodation. There are a few hotels of poor standard.

There is a subdivisional hospital which was provincialised in 1950. Details of the hospital will be found in the text on 'Medical and Public Health Services'.

The town has a Post Office which was in existence in 1890. It is under the administrative control of the Superintendent of Post Offices at Purnea. On the average 1,140 money orders are received every month for the average amount of Rs. 53,694. The average number of money orders sent every month comes to 1,365 with the amount of Rs. 73,749. There is a telephone exchange at Supaul since 1957 with 49 local connections.

There is one daily market under the management of the Notified Area Committee. Vegetables, fish, meat, sweets, grains and fruits, etc., are sold. The annual income from the said market is between Rs. 3,000 to 4,000. A weekly market (*hat*) is held on Mondays and Thursdays.

Supaul was a large centre of business before the Kosi ravages. During the period of Kosi ravages the business of this place had received a set back. Due to the recently constructed Kosi embankment Supaul is reviving its trade. Jute and rice are important business commodities for export.

License fee for jute trade is levied on the merchant on the capacity of their godowns and not on the quantity exported as is in vogue in Murliganj Notified Area Committee.

Supaul is by far the most important town in the district although Madhepura town has got the Civil Courts since many decades. The land price at Supaul town has multiplied much more than that in Madhepura town. A *katha* of land in the bazar area at Supaul is being sold for Rs. 5 to 10 thousand while the price of a piece of land of this type in Madhepura will be available for about half the price. House rent has also gone up very high.

A non-official agency has just taken up the administration of the Notified Area Committee. The Subdivisional Officer is the official Chairman while the Vice-Chairman is elected. There are a few nominated members.

The town is capable of much more expansion and can take in more population. The climate is that of the West Bengal and displaced persons would probably find the place suitable.

Surjapur.—This village in Chhattapur police-station and Supaul subdivision is at a distance of about 2 miles to the south-east of Pratapganj market and Pratapganj Inspection Bungalow. It is said that one Hajeebullah, a Muslim *fakir* of Mithila visited this place in the latter part of the 18th century and settled here. He at first used to earn his daily wages by manual labour by dint of which he became a rich man and purchased thousands of *bighas* of land in this village and also started business in grain, jute and hides. The *fakir* was a very pious man and went to Mecca thrice. Hajeebullah was highly spoken of locally and loved by all sections of the public irrespective of caste and creed. His tomb inside the mosque of Surjapur is regarded as holy by the villagers. Once in a year

thousands of Hindus and Muslims assemble on the occasion of his "*Urs*" ceremony. It is said that about 50 years back, the river Kosi was almost on the point of washing the village away. The villagers approached the saint who was then in meditation but he assured them that there would be no trouble from the river and nothing happened. This story speaks of a good inter-communal attitude which still exists.

The population of this village is 2,537 with an area of 517 acres and 407 occupied houses. It has a Post Office, one *maktab*, one Middle school, two Primary schools, one *Gram Panchayat*, one library, one community centre and one health centre. A *hat* is held here on every Wednesday and Friday. *Melas* are held on the occasions of Durga Puja and Muharram.

Sursand.—This village in Kishunganj police-station is at a distance of about 16 miles from Madhepura town. There is a mosque located at about a mile to the south-east of Sursand village and is said to be very old. About half a mile to the north of the mosque there is a mound which is said to be the *garh* of Raja Bairisal, the head of Gamharia Rajputs who came and settled down here. It is said that Raja Bairisal was a very rich man. There is a story that two Muslim *fakirs* named Shah Mulk and Shah Sadul Mulk came and settled at this village. They were cultivators. One day when they were engaged in prayer, a peon of the king came to call them but they could not go as they were in prayers. The king again sent his man to obey his order. The two brothers touched the man of the king with their scythes and the man fell down. The king was convinced of their sanctity and power. A woman from the palace, *thakurain* was married to one of the brothers. It is said a few years after the marriage the two brothers killed themselves and the woman also breathed her last on her dead husband's body. The Gamharia Rajputs still sacrifice fowls in memory of that *thakurain* before the performance of any marriage.

This story indicates a fusion of the two creeds particularly among the Rajputs of this area.

BLOCKS.

Alamnagar Block.—This block started functioning in Alamnagar since 1st April 1957. The block headquarters is situated at a distance of 16 miles from Behariganj and Bihpur Railway Stations. It covers 37 villages with a total population of 65,377, i.e., 34,449 males and 30,928 females and 12,101 occupied houses according to 1961 census*. The total area of the block is 51,546.57 acres. There are 13 *Gram Panchayats* under this block. The population of the tribals is about 200.

* The population of the blocks has been supplied by the respective block offices. There may be some difference in the final figure of 1961 census.

During 1960-61 the net demand of revenue was Rs. 1,56,724 and the percentage of annual collection was 61.28.

The block has constructed 43 *pucca* drinking wells and 169 tube-wells for rural water-supply. For irrigation, the block has constructed 28 borings, 13 pumping sets, 3 *pynes*, 78 *pucca* wells and *bundhs*.

Communication is bad. People can have access to the block headquarters *via* Bihpur-Birpur Block but they have to go five miles either on foot or by bullock-cart.

There are twelve *hats*, namely, Alamnagar, Aurai, Bisapatti, Kodra Ghat, Gaugpur Sona-Mukhi, Karauna, Khapur, Khujani, Morout, Madheli, Sapardah and Khurhaunder under this block.

The block has a Post Office, one State dispensary, one Mobile health centre, three health sub-centres at Aurai, Gangapur and Khurhan, one Veterinary dispensary and one Dak Bungalow under this block.

There are eleven villages with more than two thousand population, namely, Alamnagar, Aurai, Bargam, Basanwara, Gangapur, Hariharpur, Bajsaha, Khurhan Milik, Kunjouri, Narthua Dhajipur, Sapardah and Ratwara Kishanpur under this block.

Basantpur Block.—This block was started on 1st October 1957. It covers 96 villages with a total population of 53,255, i.e., 29,307 males and 23,948 females and 9,463 houses according to 1961 census. The total area of the block is 61,236.26 acres. There are 13 *Gram Panchayats* under the block.

During 1960-61 the net demand of revenue was Rs. 1,18,572.19 and the percentage of annual collection was 85.

The nearest railway station of this block is Forbesganj in the district of Purnea. The distance of 26 miles from Forbesganj to the block headquarters is connected by regular bus service. The road from Forbesganj to Bhimnagar *via* the block is metalled. The Kosi Project Department also runs a railway goods train on narrow gauge line to carry materials for the construction of Kosi barrage and embankment, etc., from Bathnaha to Dharan in Nepal. Communications within the block area are not good and villages are mostly connected by *kutcha* road.

There are four *hats*, namely. Birpur, Bhimnagar, Balbhadrapur, Nirmali and Narpat Pathi under this block.

The border of Nepal is hardly a mile from this block.

A barrage on the river Kosi has been constructed by the Kosi Project Department. The distance from the block to the barrage is about six miles. The Kosi Project Department has established colonies at Birpur and Bhimnagar located at about 3 and 6 miles only from the block headquarters. The block has three Inspection Bungalows at Birpur and a hospital at Birpur.

Chhatapur Block.—This block was started on 1st October 1956 with its headquarters at Chhatapur in Pratapganj Revenue *Thana* of Supaul subdivision. It covers 68 villages with a total population of 82,918, i.e., 42,459 males and 40,459 females and 11,754 houses according to 1961 census. The total area of the block is 123 square miles or 78,231 acres. There are 20 *Gram Panchayats* under this block.

During 1961-62 the net demand of revenue was Rs. 2,11,945.00 and the percentage of annual collection was 25.

The block has one State dispensary, one mobile health centre, three health sub-centres at Suryapur, Sohta and Bhimpur, one Veterinary dispensary, one High school, one Middle school and one Post Office.

As regards water-supply it may be noted that with the ravages of Kosi there was dearth of pure water-supply and the block provided 60 drinking wells.

The communication is awfully bad and the roads are mostly *kutcha*.

This block lacks a good market due to bad communication. So the villagers have mostly to depend on the local *mahajans*.

Chousa Block.—This block was started on 1st April 1959 and lies towards the south-east of Saharsa district in the most interior part of Madhepura subdivision on the border of Purnea and Bhagalpur districts. The block headquarters is at Chousa *bazar* formerly known as Chousa *Kothi* which is located at a distance of 75 miles from the district headquarters. It covers 65 villages with a total population of 68,190, i.e., 35,675 males and 32,515 females with 12,226 houses according to 1961 census. The total area of the block is 73.05 square miles. There are 15 *gram panchayats* and 14 Co-operative Societies under this block.

During 1960-61 the net demand of revenue was Rs. 1,35,583.14 and the percentage of annual collection was 38.

The block has constructed 66 tube-wells for rural water-supply. For the purpose of irrigation 14 borings have been sunk.

The tribal population is about 500 under this block.

A few industrial co-operatives like shoe making, oilman and kerosene oil co-operative societies have been started.

The block has one State dispensary and three health sub-centres at Arajpur, Fulout and Pureni. The block has one Dak Bungalow and a Post Office.

There are four important *hats*, namely, Pureni, Kalasan, Chousa and Pains.

Kahra Block.—This block was started as a pre-extension block in July, 1954 and was upgraded to the status of a Community Development Block Stage I on 1st July 1956. It covers 61 villages with a total population of 1,03,497 according to 1961 census. The population of the tribals is 300. The total area of the block is 76,763 acres. There are 31 *gram panchayats* and 46 Co-operative Societies under this block.

During 1961-62 the net demand of revenue was Rs. 1,09,953 and the annual collection was 31 per cent.

The block office is situated at village Kahra. Rural electrification has already been made in a number of villages namely, Nariar, Kahra, Parari, Bangaon, Bariahi, Agnanpur, Murli, Bihra and Panchgachia. The block has set up a number of irrigational wells. There is one State dispensary and a mobile health centre and two sub-centres. There is a Veterinary centre at Bangaon.

There are six important *hats*, namely, Kahra, Bangaon, Panchgachia, Mahesi, Bariahi and Kharagpur.

Communications are bad. Almost all the roads are *kutcha* except a portion of Saharsa-Supaul *pucca* road through this block. The block has one Dak Bungalow at Bariahi.

There are fourteen villages with more than 2,000 population, namely, Bangaon, Chainpur, Parari, Sulibabad, Kahra, Nariar, Murli, Sihaul, Lalganj, Bihra, Patori, Panchgachia, Sattar and Dorma.

Kumarkhand Block.—This block was started in October, 1959. It covers 73 villages with a total population of 80,921, i.e., 41,868 males and 39,053 females and 13,647 occupied houses according to 1961 census. The total area of the block is 61,626.96 acres. There are 23 *Gram Panchayats* under this block.

During 1960-61 the net demand of revenue was Rs. 1,59,084.75 and the percentage of annual collection was 31.

The block has one State dispensary at Kumarkhand, three health sub-centres at Bhatane, Ranipath and Israin and two high schools at Ramnagar and Ranipath and a Post Office.

A seed multiplication farm is also working in Kumarkhand.

Murliganj is the main market at a distance of about 8 miles from the block headquarters outside the block area.

A training-*cum*-production centre (tailoring) had been started in the block.

There are eight important *hats*, namely, Rauta, Yabnapath, Kumarkhand, Ramnagar, Parmanandpur, Bhatand, Srinagar and Bishunpur.

The block has a number of temples and mosque at Bishunpur Ramnagar, Laxmipur, Kumarkhand, Gurea, Rauta, Barkuawa, Khurda and Bhatani.

There are twelve villages with more than two thousand population, namely, Bishunpur, Puraini, Ramnagar, Parmanandpur, Sripur, Kumarkhand, Mangarwara, Belari, Bhata, Korlihi, Beswah and Israinkola.

Madhepura Block.—This block was started as pre-extension block in September, 1961 and was upgraded to the status of a Community Development Block, Stage I on 1st October, 1961. It covers 65 villages with a total population of 105,637, i.e., 54,754 males and 50,883 females and 14,068 occupied houses according to 1961 census. The total area of the block is 105.20 square miles. There are 25 *gram panchayats* under this block.

During 1961-62 the net demand of revenue was Rs. 5,78,131.00 and the percentage of annual collection was 21.

As regards communication, two *pucca* roads pass through this block. One is connected with Saharsa, Kishanganj and Murliganj and the other with Sonbarsa. These roads have been constructed by the P. W. D. Besides, there are *kutcha* village roads in the block.

The block has no industry. Two training-*cum*-production centres one for leather goods and the other for electro-plating are functioning in the block. The block has a Post Office.

There is a well developed market at Madhepura itself which is a notified area. Besides, there are seven *hats* held bi-weekly in the rural areas, namely, Bhatrajeda, Chiknstwa, Ghailar, Mathai, Bharahi, Budhma and Beraili.

At village Bhinikhi there is one Christian Mission which runs a dispensary at a distance of about one mile from Madhepura. At village Surinagar about 16 miles from Madhepura there are signs of the existence of a very old building. Its outer appearance indicates that it is a very old one and it must have been a palace of some ruler.

The block has two health centres and one Veterinary dispensary. The block has a Dak Bungalow maintained by the District Board, four High schools for boys and one High school for girls.

There are seventeen villages with more than 2,000 population, namely, Srinagar, Chitti, Bhatmandha, Bhelwa, Sahigarh, Maheshwa, Madaupur, Madhuban, Ghailar, Jhithia, Ratanpur, Barahi, Bhouri, Tekthi, Dhurgoun, Marho and Manikpur.

Murliganj Block.—This block was started as a pre-extension block in October, 1955 and was upgraded to the status of a Community Development Block, Stage I on 1st July 1958 and Stage II on 1st October, 1961. It covers 82 villages and 12 smaller units (*halkas*)

with a total population of 97,308 according to 1961 census. The population of the tribals is 2,300. The total area of the block is 99.8 square miles. There are 22 *gram panchayats* and 82 Co-operative Societies under this block.

During 1961-62 the net demand of revenue was Rs. 4,51,293 and the annual collection was 17.28 per cent.

The block office is situated about one mile away from Murliganj Railway Station. The block has set up a number of irrigational wells, tanks and 10 pumping sets. For rural water-supply the block has constructed a number of tube-wells and ordinary surface wells. There is one State dispensary and a mobile health centre and three health sub-centres. There is a Veterinary centre, one Higher Secondary school and one Basic Training school at Murliganj.

There are three important *hats* and *melas*, namely, Murliganj, Aarar, Joriyama under this block. Murliganj is a big market and is important for jute and bamboo trade. Jute is exported to Calcutta and bamboo is generally exported to Pahleza and Bansghat in Bihar.

Communications are bad. Almost all the roads within the jurisdiction of the block are *kutcha* except Murliganj-Madhepura Road which covers a distance of 8 miles of the block and secondly Madhepura-Udakishanganj Road *via* Aarar which covers only 4 miles of the block. There is only one Dak Bungalow at Murliganj.

There are fourteen villages with a population of more than 2,000 souls, namely. Bhatkhora, Tamod Para, Torgama, Jitapur, Parwa, Rampur, Belokalan, Gangapur, Rajain, Raghunathpur, Dighi, Haripurkalam, Babhangama and Kathantiya.

Pipra Block.—This block was started in 1961. It covers 39 villages with a total population of 63,617, *i.e.*, 32.140 males and 31,477 females with 8,847 houses according to 1961 census. The total area of the block is 120 square miles. There are 17 *gram panchayats* under this block.

During 1960-61 the net demand of revenue was Rs. 1,23,909.50 and the annual collection was Rs. 65,708.02.

There is no big market in the block. The villagers have to go to Supaul or Madhepura market to purchase commodities and to dispose off the agricultural products. There are six *hats* in the block. There are some temples and mosques in the villages where local people worship.

Communications are bad. There is one road called Bihpur-Birpur Road which passes through the eastern portion of this block.

There is one District Board dispensary located at Pipra and one more dispensary located in village Thumba under this block. It has three health sub-centres in villages Sakhua, Tulapatti and Babhauni. The block has one Dak Bungalow maintained by the District Board and a Post Office.

There are fifteen villages with more than 2,000 population namely, Ratauli, Thumba, Dinapathi, Sakhua, Turhi, Bhunipur, Maheshpur, Pathru, Hatbaria, Nirmali, Kataiya, Ramnagar, Aitha, Pipra and Basha.

Raghopur Block.—This block was set up on 1st April, 1955. This is one of the oldest blocks of the district of Saharsa. Raghopur is the headquarters of this block. It is situated at a distance of 24 miles from Supaul town and 45 miles from the district headquarters. The block was upgraded to the status of Community Development Block, Stage II on 1st April, 1961. It covers 69 villages with a total population of 94,916, i.e., 48,551 males and 46,365 females and 14,066 occupied houses according to 1961 census. The total area of the block is 121 square miles. There are 26 *gram panchayats* under this block.

The block has three dispensaries at Pratapganj, Karjain and Gaupalganj and one hospital at Sinsahi, one Dak Bungalow at Raghopur and one at Pratapganj and one Post Office.

The following statement will indicate in brief, the important schemes taken up and their progress till March, 1963 under this block:—

Serial no.	Nature of schemes.	No. of schemes taken up.	No. of schemes completed.
1	Sluice gate under medium irrigation scheme.	1	It is under construction.
2	Drinking wells	65	30
3	Repair of drinking wells ..	134	111
4	Drinking tube-wells ..	33	25
5	Minor Irrigation *bundhs* ..	58	26
6	Irrigation wells	71	71
7	Tube-well boring	17	17

Two *pucca* roads one from Maheshpur to Karjain and the other from Simrahi to Pratapganj have been constructed by P. W. D.

There are altogether six *hats*, namely, Simrahi, Pratapganj, Gaupalganj, Karjain, Gaddi and Mahadeo *Asthan* under this block.

There are seventeen villages with more than 2,000 population, namely, Karjain, Baisi, Govindpur, Hariraha, Beuraha, Shripur, Bishanpur Daulat, Sukhnagar, Takuna, Bhawanipur, Simrahi, Rambishanpur, Chilouni, Dharhara, Debipur, Raghopur and [illegible] under this block.

Singheshwar Block.—This block was started as a pre-extension block in April, 1959 and was upgraded to the status of a Community Development Block, Stage I on 1st April, 1960. It covers 45 villages and 10 *halkas* with a total population of 1,02,731, i.e., 52,639 males

and 50,092 females according to the census of 1961. The population of Harijans is 22,144. The total area of the block is 128.39 square miles. There are a large number of *gram panchayats* and Co-operative Societies under this block.

During 1960-61 the net demand of revenue was Rs. 5,65,774.65 and the annual collection was 43.16 per cent.

The block office is situated at about the middle of the district. The block has set up irrigational wells, boring wells, tanks and pumping sets. There is one State dispensary and a mobile health centre and two health sub-centres. There is a Veterinary centre at Singheshwar.

So far as cottage industry is concerned a carpentry training-*cum*-production centre, a blacksmithy training-*cum*-production centre, oil-making centre, rice husking centre and a centre for production of Ayurvedic medicines, a tailoring and cutting training production centre and a *durry* weaving training-*cum*-production centre are functioning under this block.

There are four important *hats*, namely, Singheshwar, Gamharia, Shankarpur and Madheli under this block which are important for trade and commerce of grains, cattle and miscellaneous goods.

The Singheshwar *mela* is held at the time of Shivaratri where about 10,000 persons congregate to worship at the Shiva temple. There is a big cattle market. Elephants and horses are also sold.

Communications are bad. Almost all the roads are *kutcha* except a portion of Bihpur-Birpur *pucca* road running through this block. The block has one Dak Bungalow at Gamharia.

Two villages only, namely, Singheshwar and Goripur are electrified in this block.

There are nineteen villages with more than 2,000 population, namely, Gamharia, Babhni, Kamaragama, Musa, Piprani, Aurki, Gidhour, Behari, Chikni, Fulkha, Jibachpur, Rupauli, Lalpur, Jirva, Sukhsaran, Patroi, Gosipur, Ranvir, Gahumane and Majorhat.

Sonbarsa Block.—This block was started on 1st April 1958. It covers 60 villages with a total population of 81,754, i.e., 41,970 males and 39,784 females and 11,355 occupied houses according to 1961 census. The total area of the block is 85.09 square miles. There are 20 *gram panchayats* under this block.

During 1960-61 the net demand of revenue was Rs. 1,28,531.82 and the percentage of collection was 30.

About 165 drinking wells and 85 hand tube-wells have been provided in the block for rural water-supply. For irrigation, 113 wells and 25 open borings have been completed. It has a Post Office.

There is an unmetalled road connecting Sonbarsa with Saharsa town. One bus service from Saharsa town to Sonbarsa plies. During rainy season communications become worse and the bus does not ply.

The block is important for an old temple, viz., "*Chandi Asthan*" situated in village Biratpur which is at a distance of about six miles from Sonbarsa.

There are six *hats,* viz., Durgapur, Kashnagar, Garhbazar, Mahuabazar, Sonbarsa and Saheul.

The block has District Board dispensaries at Saheul, Maugnar and Lagma and a health centre at Sonbarsa and three health sub-centres at Arsi, Basnahi and Biratpur. There are eleven villages with more than 2,000 population, namely, Lagma, Shahpur, Soba, Sanbarm, Khajuraha, Biratpur, Mangnar, Bargam, Saheul, Nonaity and Kashnagar.

Sour Bazar Block.—This block was started as Community Development Block, Stage I on 26th January, 1957 and was upgraded to the status of Stage II on 1st April, 1963. It covers 71 villages with a total area of 119.08 square miles. There are 28 *gram panchayats* and 31 Co-operative Societies under this block.

During 1961-62 the net demand of revenue was Rs. 2,01,250.00 and the annual collection was 37 per cent.

The block has been able to sink a number of wells for drinking water, tube-wells and wells for irrigation There is one State dispensary, a mobile health centre and three health sub-centres at Baijnathpur, Routa and Patarghat.

There is one training-*cum*-production centre (knitting and embroidery) at block headquarters. There are five important *hats* at villages Baijnathpur, Bakhari, Sour bazar, Kachari and Patarghat. There is a heavy turnover of grains and miscellaneous goods at these *hats.*

Communications are bad. Almost all the roads are *kutcha* and in the rainy season it is very difficult to reach even the block headquarters.

There are four villages with more than 2,000 population, namely, Dhaboli, Golma, Suhath and Patarghat.

Uda Kishunganj Block.—This block was started in April, 1955, as a Community Development Block, Stage I and was upgraded to the status of Stage II on 2nd October, 1961. It covers 84 villages. There are about 100 families of Scheduled Tribes. The total area of the block is 11 square miles. There are 28 *gram panchayats* and 33 Co-operative Societies under this block.

During 1961-62 the net demand of revenue was Rs. 4,63,982 and the annual collection was 19 per cent.

For rural water-supply and irrigational purposes the block has set up a number of drinking wells, hand tube-wells, irrigational and surface wells. There is one State dispensary, one mobile health centre and three health sub-centres at Mazoura, Khera and Bihariganj. There are Homoeopathic dispensaries at Nayanagar and Golpara which are controlled by the District Board.

There is a small sugar factory within the block which engages about 100 workers.

There are four important *hats,* namely, Uda Kishunganj, Bihariganj, Golpara and Karoute under this block. Bihariganj is an important market for trade in jute and grains.

There is a Dak Bungalow. Kishanganj has a college and a High school. There are also High schools at Bihariganj, Golpara and Sahjadpur.

There is a *Devi* temple at Nayanagar at a distance of 5 miles from the block headquarters which is visited by people from great distance on every Monday.

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BSP (Rev.) 25—Lino—2,000—16-6-1965—EM and others.



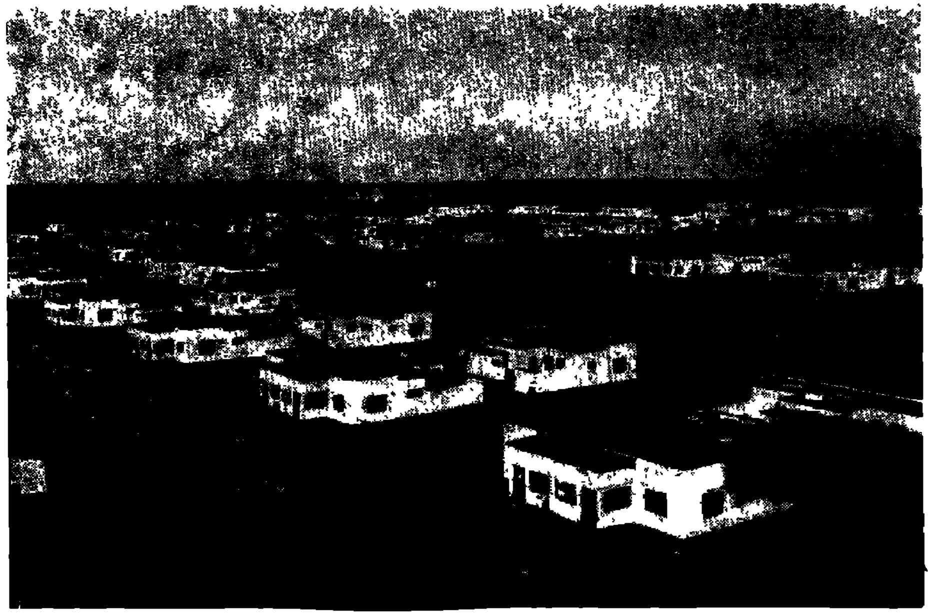
Khadir-Vani deity worshipped as Ugratara. (without robes).



Sculpture on the door jamb of Kandaha temple.



Full view of the main Kosi Barrage.



Aerial view of Birpur Colony.



Flood scene of Nirmali—1955.



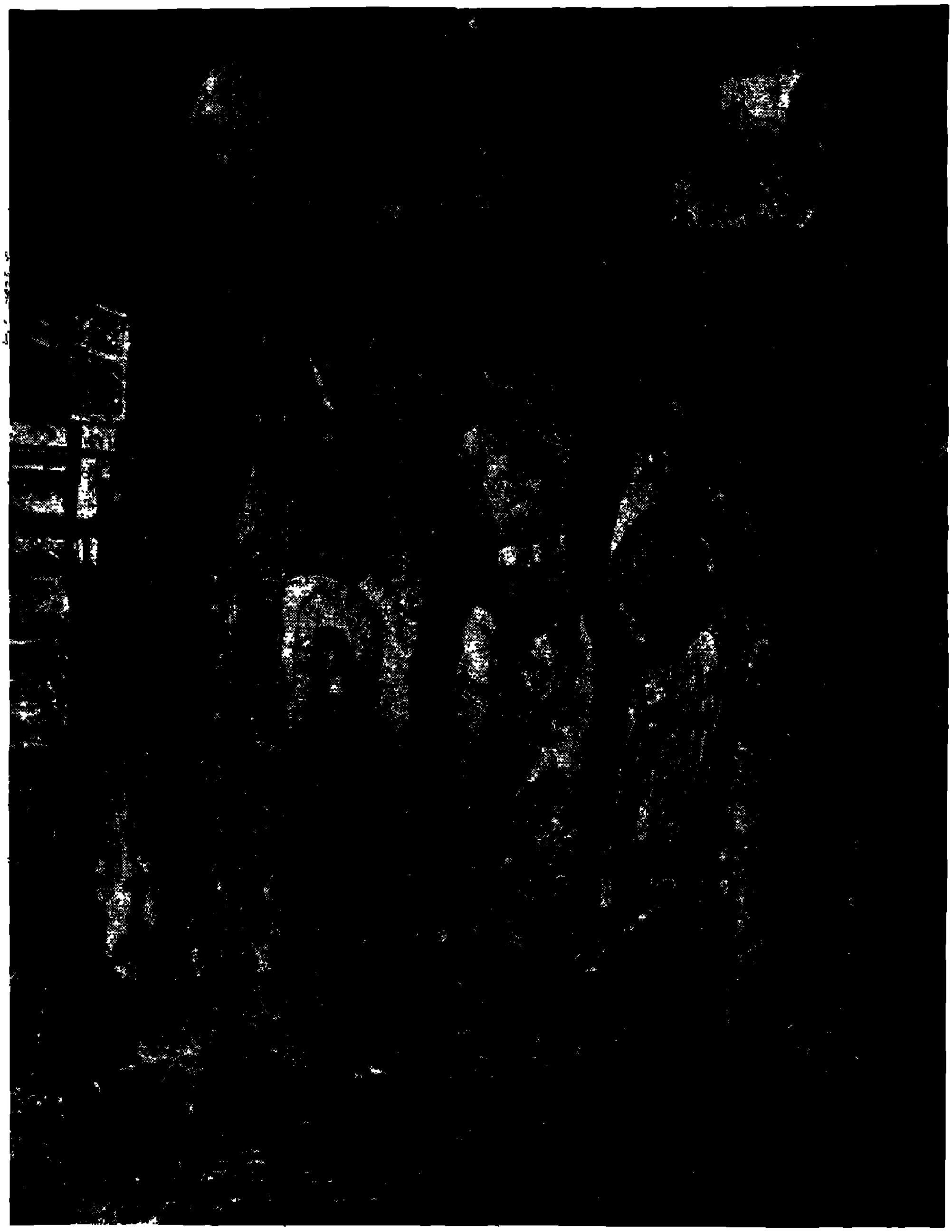
Khadir-Vani Tara worshipped as Ugratara at Maheshi village (robed).



Image of Chandi.



Cradle move on the rope for the purpose of guaging water and hill in rainy season.



Surya God at Kandaha village.